

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

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**For week of July 14 - 20, 2008**

X, "**Not Death, but Life**," Christian Science Journal, Vol.1 (August 1883), p. 7.

--To acknowledge the Truth of being and the teachings of our Master, is to gain something more of Life.

- Every thought would then carry us toward that perfect spiritual harmony that abides in Truth, and this belief of life in matter would be to us but a passing dream and error.

---Our Master said, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die;" and he said this when he was about to call Lazarus from the tomb.

- It was not of the so-called material life that he spoke, but of the immortal or spiritual facts of man's being.

--The boundary of man's mortal vision is death, and with the senses material he sees not beyond it.

- Would he but abolish all faith in dying in order to live, how much greater works could he do in proof of immortality.

**SECTION I: The Translation of Enoch** (Gen 5: 21-24)

RELATED SCRIPTURE: II Kings 2:10,11; Heb 11:5; Jude vv.14,15

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: Ascribed to Moses, written after the Exodus (@1445 BC), but before Moses' death (@1405 BC). The events occurred three centuries earlier @3300 BC.

"The ages of these antediluvians is problematic.... Various suggestions have been offered to explain them, from gematria (assigning numerical values to words) to astronomy (e.g., Enoch's age 365=days in a year)... At present all that can be said is that they reflect the author's belief that these people were real yet lived a long time ago." (Eerdmans Commentary)

"It is noteworthy that the life of Enoch is the shortest mentioned in this [chapter]." (Dummelow Commentary) "The life of Enoch provides the only break in the chapter from the incessant comment, 'and he died.'" (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"Babylonian tradition also reports that Enmeduranki, the seventh hero prior to the flood, was taken by God, i.e. translated (2 Kings 2.11)." (New Oxford Annotated Bible)

### **Enoch**

[Ē'nek] ("dedication")

Adam

Cain

Enosh (Enoch?)

Abel

Seth  
    Enos  
        Cainan  
            Mahalaleel  
                Jared (father)  
                    **Enoch** = Edni  
                        **Methuselah** (son)  
                            Lamech  
                                Noah  
                                    (Son)

The first son of Jared (Gen 5:18), father of Methuselah (Gen 5:21,22), "and a 7<sup>th</sup>-generation descendent of Adam (Jude 14)." (Eerdmans Dictionary) He was a descendent of Seth. His father was 162 years old when he was born. After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch "walked with God three hundred years," when he was translated without tasting death. His whole life on earth was 365. He is spoken of in the catalogue of Old Testament worthies in the Epistle to the Hebrews. When he was translated, only Adam, so far as recorded, had as yet died a natural death, and Noah was not yet born. Mention is made of Enoch's prophesying only in Jude.

"Traces of the legend are found in Hebrews 11.5, where Enoch has become a hero of faith. The brief reference in Genesis is further elaborated in Jewish Midrashic tradition; his wife's name was Edni, and he spent hidden years with the angels before he was taken up to heaven." (Oxford Guide to People & Places)

"A whole circle of apocalyptic literature was ascribed to him in the post-exilic days, which is embodied in the so-called book of Enoch." (Dummelow Commentary)

**Methuselah**  
(‘man of the javelin’)

"One of the long-lived ancestors before the Flood. In the Sethite genealogy in Genesis 5.21-27, which lists one male for each of the ten generations from Adam to Noah, Methuselah is listed eighth, the son of Enoch and the grandfather of Noah. Methuselah is the longest lived (969 years), but all ten live to remarkably high ages, as do the pre-Flood ancestors of Mesopotamian tradition." (Oxford Guide to People & Places)

**Twitchell, Pierrepont E., "The Patriarchs,"** POEM, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.31 (1929), p. 427.

They walked with God, those splendid men of old,  
The patriarchs. Their hearts within them told  
His presence near. Safe in His arms they dwelt;  
And in the watches of the night they felt  
The blessing of His being and His love,  
And saw His glory in the skies above.

And Enoch walked with God: a ray of light  
From out the darkness shown; from out the night  
A beam of Life. And Enoch walked with God—  
And was not: God had taken him. He trod

The pathway upward from this vale of dreams  
Until he climbed to where the sunlight streams....

For God is All;  
And He is near, and hears us when we call.

**Winchester, Margaret L., "Enoch Walked with God,"** POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.64 (March 1946), p. 140.

He walked with God; the first  
Of all the patriarchs thus to know  
The divine presence. Did he stand  
At evening in the dusk, and looking up  
Into the vast and starry dome of heaven,  
Commune with Principle, and see  
The harmony and ordered beauty  
Of His plan? Did he in midnight hour  
Pace the rough flagstone court  
And battling with false claims of sin and death  
Feel His dear nearness, know  
His mighty strength and power,  
And healed and comforted, lie down to rest?  
And in the dawn's clear brightness  
Did he rise to feel the light of Truth  
Break in his heart, and spreading wide,  
Send out a warming glow of hope and joy?....

**Paine, Gustavus S., "Methuselah and Longevity,"** EDITORIAL, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.23 (9 July 1921), p. 837.

--Of Methuselah, the son of Enoch and the grandfather of Noah, the Bible has very little to say.

- The fact which has made him famous is stated in the twenty-seventh verse of the fifth chapter of Genesis where we are informed that "all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years;" but as to what he did during these years we know nothing.

---His name has stood out amid the host of Scriptural names simply because to him is ascribed the greatest number of years recorded in all the genealogical data of the Bible.

- In other words, he has represented throughout subsequent history what has been considered a more or less improbable ideal of longevity.

**Bergenheim, Richard C.** (CSB, Editor-in-chief, Director, Contributing Editor, and President; Boston, MA), "**Walking with God,**" Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.95 (28 June 1991), p. 24.

--According to the Scriptures, Enoch's son Methuselah lived for 969 years.

- Suppose Methuselah retired and moved to the shore when he was sixty-five.

---Now stretched before him, as a friend once noted, are 904 years of fishing and beach-combing and trying to make ends meet on his social security benefits. How long do you think it would be before he got tired of the whole thing? Fortunately, there was no advertising then to teach Methuselah that his health might fall apart after a few years.

- The experience of Methuselah's father illustrates that God sustains man.

--Enoch increased in spirituality. His daily communion with God spared him the ravages of mortality, for his awareness of God's presence was so strong that the Bible talks of him as walking with God. Doesn't this provide all of us with food for thought?

**SECTION II: God's Command to Abraham, and His First Steps in Faith** (Gen 12: 1,4,5)

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: Ascribed to Moses, written after the Exodus (@1445 BC), but before Moses' death (@1405 BC). The events occurred three centuries earlier.

"In what manner the call came to Abraham, whether through some outward incident which he recognized as the prompting of Providence, or through the suggestions of the Divine Spirit in his inmost soul, we do not know. Anyhow he regarded it as divine and authoritative, and it was too definite to be misunderstood." (Dummelow Commentary)

**Abram**/Abraham

[Ā'brā hām] (Heb. "father is exalted")

“**ABRAHAM.** Fidelity; faith in the divine Life and in the eternal Principle of being.

This patriarch illustrated the purpose of Love to create trust in good, and showed the life-preserving power of spiritual understanding.” (S&H 579: 10-14)

**(Abbreviated)**

Abraham was the first patriarch and was founder of the Hebrew nation. He is “the earliest biblical character who is delineated clearly enough to be correlated, to a limited extent, within world history. His homeland on the Fertile Crescent (possibly at Haran) and movements southeast toward Chaldean Ur, then west to Canaan and Egypt, corresponded to known Amorite migratory and commercial routes.” (Oxford Guide to People & Places) In Jewish, Christian, and Moslem tradition, he emerges as a father-figure— dignified, firm in his faith, humane, respected by the local rulers wherever he went. He moves slowly and majestically across the Near Eastern world of nearly four-thousand years ago, from Mesopotamia [**Iraq**] to Egypt. The main setting for his story is the central hill country in the Land of Canaan [**Israel**] promised to him and his seed by God.

Abram (as he was first called) came originally from “Ur of the Chaldeans,” a Sumerian city in the Euphrates valley, near the head of the Persian Gulf. With his father, Terah, his wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot, he moved up the river till they came to rest in Haran, a trading center in northern Aram [**as Syria was then called**]. The family settled in this area, and here Terah died.

At Haran the Lord appeared to Abram and told him to leave “*for the land I will show you,*” where he would make of Abram “*a great nation.*” Thirteen years elapsed, during which Abram still dwelt in Hebron, when the covenant was renewed, and the rite of circumcision established as its sign.

With Sarai and Lot he traveled to Canaan, and reached Shechem (**the modern Nablus**). Abram built an altar there, and another near Bethel (**a little north of Jerusalem**). The Lord again appeared to him and said: “*To your descendants I will give this land.*” This promise was repeated during Abram’s lifetime. "Abraham's...descendants fall into three groups: those who descended from Ishmael (Ishmaelites or Arabs), those descended from Isaac (Edomites and Israelites), and those descended from the various sons of Keturah (a collateral line of Arabs)." (Eerdmans Dictionary)

**Lot**

[Laht] (“Heb. Lot: a covering; veil”)

Terah = 1<sup>st</sup> wife  
**Abram** = **Sarai** (half-sister and wife)  
Haran  
= **Lot** 2<sup>nd</sup> wife  
**Sarai**

Lot was "the nephew of Abraham and ancestor of Moab and Ammon," (Oxford Guide to People & Places), and the son of his brother Haran. “Lot is first mentioned in Gen 11:31 as migrating with his uncle Abraham and grandfather Terah from Ur of the Chaldeans toward Canaan [**Israel**].” (Harper Collins Dictionary) He later went with Abraham into Egypt, and back again to Canaan. Both Lot and Abraham had large herds of cattle, and their herdsmen quarreled over their pasturelands. At Abraham’s suggestion, the two decided to separate.

Abraham gave Lot his choice of land; and Lot chose the more fertile, well-watered site—the Jordan River valley—as opposed to the rocky hill country. Failing to take into account the character of the inhabitants, Lot “pitched his tent toward Sodom. [**south of Dead Sea, in modern Jordan**]”

When the Elamite king Chedorlaomer invaded Canaan with his allies, Lot was taken captive. Abraham attacked Chedorlaomer’s forces by night and rescued his nephew, his wife, and their children (Gen 13:1-14:16).

“Lot’s character is revealed by the major decisions he made throughout his life. He chose to pitch his tent with the worldly Sodomites, seeking riches and a life of ease rather than a path of obedience to God. He prospered for a while, but this decision eventually led to his humiliation and the tragic loss of his wife and other members of his family.” (Who Was Who in the Bible)

**Sarai/Sarah**

[Sar’uh] (“princess, noble lady”)

Sarah’s name was originally Sarai, but it was changed to Sarah by God, much as her husband’s name was changed from Abram to Abraham (Sara, the Greek form, is used in the NT). Ten years younger than Abraham, Sarah was his half-sister (Gen 20:12); they had the same father but different mothers. “Marriages with half brothers were not uncommon in her time.” (Holman Dictionary) "The book of Genesis describes her as a beautiful woman, a theme elaborated by later tradition, especially in *Genesis Aprocryphon* from Qumran. According to the biblical narrators, Abraham was so conscious of her beauty that before they entered Egypt at the time of a severe famine in their own land, he begged her not to reveal to the Egyptians that she was his wife but rather his sister, lest he be killed." (Oxford Guide to People & Places)

"Sarah was about 65 years old when she and Abraham left Haran (Gen 12:5; 17:7). Passing through Egypt, Abraham introduced Sarah as his sister, apparently to keep himself from being killed by those who would be attracted by Sarah’s beauty (Gen 12:10-20; also see 20:1-18)." (Who Was Who in the Bible)

In spite of God’s promise to Abraham that he would become the father of a chosen nation, Sarah remained barren. When she was 75, she decided that the only way to realize

God's promise was to present to Abraham her Egyptian maidservant, Hagar, by whom he could father a child, a custom according to which Hagar's child would be considered Sarah's. "But the plan backfired when Hagar became pregnant and regarded Sarah with contempt." (HarperCollins Dictionary) Hagar bore a son named Ishmael.

"When Abraham and Sarah were too old for childbearing, God reiterated the promise, changing Sarai's name to Sarah." (Ibid) When she was 90 years old, far beyond her childbearing years, she gave birth to a son, Isaac—the child of promise. After Isaac was born, Sarah caught Ishmael mocking the young child and, with God's approval, sent both Ishmael and Hagar into the wilderness.

At the age of 127, Sarah passed away at Kirjath Arba (Hebron) and was buried by Abraham in the cave of Machpelah. Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age was recorded at death—a sign of her great importance to the early Hebrews.

**Key, Lt Col Robert Ellis, RA (Ret)** (CSB, Associate Editor, and Editor), "**The Call**," POEM, Christian Science Journal (February 1930), p. 608.

Dost thou hear a call arise,  
Out of dark and troubled skies,  
Out of error's awful night?

Look not on the lightening flash,  
Wait not for the thunder to crash,  
Only know where power lies.

Doth not God untroubled stand,  
Sovereign of the sea and land,  
Master of the billow's fate?

Ask of Him, for He hath given  
Victory in earth and heaven;  
Truth is certain, therefore wait.

"**Abraham, the man who trusted God**," FOR CHILDREN, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.95 (16 August 1993), p. 30.

- Their neighbors worshipped idols, but Abraham and his family prayed to God.
  - Abraham trusted God with all his heart.
    - After his father was gone, he became chief of the clan.
  - God told him to move to a new country.
    - Abraham was seventy-five years old.
  - But he and his family knew God would lead them safely.
    - So Abraham and Sarah and Lot and all the people that lived with them left Haran.
  - After many days they reached Canaan, and God told them this was their new home.
- Abraham can be an example for us today.

"**Abraham and Lot**," FOR CHILDREN, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.95 (23 August 1993), p. 34.

--God led Abraham and his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot to a new home near a place called Bethel in the land of Canaan. (You can find this account in chapters 12 and 13 of Genesis.)

--Both Abraham and Lot were very wealthy.

- Not only did they have a lot of gold and silver, but both of them had large flocks of sheep and goats, and some other animals as well.

---They also had many people who worked with them to take care of the animals and to raise crops for food.

--This new land was wonderful.

- There was lots of water.
- The soil was fertile.

---The book of Genesis says that it was so beautiful that it was like “the garden of the Lord” (13:10).

**Gross, Willis F.** (CSB, Lecturer, Assistant Editor, and President), "**From Egypt to Canaan,**" Christian Science Journal, Vol.28 (June 1910), p. 149.

--More than four hundred years before the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt, the Lord had promised Abraham that his seed should become a mighty nation and that He would give them the land of Canaan for an inheritance.

- This promise was about to be fulfilled.

---After the passage of the Red Sea, the journey to the promised land was begun in earnest.

- The Israelites had experienced the saving power of Truth.

---But the humans' belief in evil is so deeply rooted that one experience, however marvelous, is not sufficient to destroy the fear of evil.

- Through many trying experiences, oftentimes the result of yielding to temptation, the children of Israel learned to obey and trust the God of Abraham their father.

#### Abram's Faulty Assumption, and God's Revelation and Response (Gen 15: 1-3

[to:],5,6)

RELATED SCRIPTURE: Gen 22:17; Ps 7:10; 84:9; Rom 4:3,9,18,22; Gal 3:6; James 2:23

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: Ascribed to Moses, written after the Exodus (@1445 BC), but before Moses' death (@1405 BC). The events occurred three centuries earlier.

"In response to God's encouragement and admonition (v.1), Abram showed what nagged at him....The question, "What [wilt thou] give me?" (v.2) became an accusation, "[Thou hast given no seed]! (v.3)." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

#### **Eliezer**

[El'ee-ee'zuhr] ("God is my strength")

Eliezer was "the oldest and most trusted of Abraham's servants (Gen 15:2-3). Ancient Near Eastern texts contain references to the practice of adopting servants as heirs in the case of childlessness, and the story of Abraham here reflects such influences." (Eerdmans Dictionary)

**Leith, Lucia Johnson,** "**Individual purpose and 'seed as the stars,'**" Christian Science Journal, Vol.110 (May 1992), p. 28.

--The dominant view of identity is that it is biological—that mankind function as personal creators.

--To experience more of...fulfillment demands that we progressively give up common assumptions as to what constitutes happiness—the notion, for instance, that it depends on having a certain rank in society or a certain number of children.

- As we begin to move beyond these conceptions, our increasingly spiritual view of identity may well open to us a new understanding of family, an understanding that encompasses far more than a limited nucleus defined by bloodlines.

---We'll begin to glimpse something of the inclusive nature of God's promise to Abraham "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven." [Gen 22:17]

**Veazey, Kathryn Laney, "Requirement and Reward,"** POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.74 (January 1956), p. 36.

The way is plain to see,  
This I must do:  
In patient trusting and with humble tears  
Yield up the ego of the self-taught years;  
Listen, and learn Love's purpose to fulfill,  
Serving with joy, find joy is with me still.

**The Faith of Abraham** (Heb 11: 8,11,12)

AUTHOR AND TIME LINE: Although generally ascribed to Paul, the author of Hebrews is unknown, and was written 67-69 AD

"The land of Canaan [*into a place*, v.8, was] far from Abraham's original home in Ur of the Chaldees (Gen.11:31). He went by faith." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"[Abraham] trusted that God would yet fulfill his promise, even when age and health appeared to contradict the possibility (vv.11-12)." (Eerdmans Commentary]

**"a child"/Isaac**

**(Abbreviated)**

Isaac is the only son of Abraham and Sarah, but the second son born to Abraham. "The principle stories about Isaac are found in Genesis 21-28. Isaac is a more shadowy figure than the other patriarchs, and little if anything can be said of him as a historical figure." (Oxford Guide to People & Places) "Abraham was ninety-nine years old when the Lord told him that his barren wife Sarah would bear him a son." (Who's Who in the Old Testament) According to the account in Genesis, Abraham laughed in his heart, and Sarah was also bitterly amused because she was ninety and long past child-bearing age. The son was called Isaac (Hebrew *Yitzhak*) meaning 'he laughed.'" "This partially explains why they named their son Isaac." (Who Was Who in the Bible)

**"Our True Homeland,"** Christian Science Monitor (14 August 1992), p. 18.

--Abraham was the patriarch who actually began that voyage toward a homeland and a deeper understanding of God.

- He was inspired to leave his native land and look for a new place, which was promised to him by God.

---In accepting this goal, Abraham began to understand that there is truly just one God, and he developed a new relationship with Him.

--Speaking of Abraham's quest, the writer of the book of Hebrews in the Bible says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

--Abraham's faith wasn't just a matter of crossing his fingers and hoping for the best.

- Instead, he was actively turning to God for guidance.  
---And as he did this, he found that God was with him wherever he went.

**Land, Judge John R.**, “**Abraham and Isaac**,” Christian Science Journal, Vol.35 (1917), p. 377.

--Abraham represents “fidelity; faith in the divine Life and in the eternal Principle of being,” as we read in *Science and Health* (p. 579).

- Isaac is symbolic of the belief that life is in matter and that man is a creator, while Abraham represents the true idea of Life as good, infinite, perfect, changeless, independent, and indestructible being.

---Isaac, on the other hand, appears to present the view of life as finite, imperfect, mutable, destructible, and dependent upon material conditions and organizations.

- This story of Abraham and Isaac is therefore but a picture of the mental struggle which took place in Abraham’s consciousness between the spiritual or right idea and the material or wrong concept of man as physical.

#### **SECTION IV: Raising the Widow's Son at Nain** (Luke 7: 11-15)

RELATED SCRIPTURE: I Kings 17: 17-24; II Kings 4:32-37

TIME LINE: The Year of Popularity (Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> year of ministry), 28 AD at Nain

“Now Jesus raises the dead, an anticipation of the series of claims he makes in 7:22, this time echoing not Isaiah but I Kings 17:17-24, Elijah raising the son of a Sidonian widow. In his inaugural sermon Jesus had already appealed to Elijah raising this widow's son (4:25-26), there making the point that 'there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah,...yet Elijah was sent to none of them.' Luke is echoing both I Kings 17 and Jesus' sermon in ch. 4.” (Eerdmans Commentary)

This story is unique to Luke. It “comes from Luke’s special material, L; it is without parallel in the gospel’s tradition.” (Interpreter’s One Volume Commentary) “*Soon afterward*” (v. 11) hints that Luke is not quite sure when it happened. In v.12 the phrase *carried out* refers to the fact that “Jewish tombs were always outside the walls, and burials were required to be performed within 24 hours.” (Dummelow Commentary) "This [*he...touched the bier*, v.14] was a ceremonially defiling act, normally." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

The status of widows in ancient Israelite society was precarious. Having no inheritance rights and often in want of life’s necessities, they were exposed to harsh treatment and exploitation. This story is peculiar to Luke and it reveals Jesus’ sensitivity to the widow’s marginal existence. This miracle was done in front of “*much people*” and similar to the raising of Lazarus in the presence of a multitude of witnesses. The bier is a pallet, not a coffin. This raising from the dead is in contrast to the struggle and difficulty experienced by both Elijah and Elisha, and indicates Jesus’ authority with the single word of power: “*Arise.*”

#### **"a widow"** of Nain

"Nain was a small village in Galilee about seven miles southwest of Nazareth [and 25 miles SW of Capernaum on the hill “little Hermon” as it slopes down to the plain of Esdraelon to the southeast, not in Galilee proper; now a squalid collection of mud hovels]. Luke tells us that Jesus traveled to Nain from Capernaum, where he had cured the slave of a Roman centurion. Before Jesus enters the village gates, he encounters a funeral procession. Luke relates the circumstances to show how pitiful the situation is. 'A man who had died was being carried out' (v.12), accompanied by his mother, a widow.'" (Women in Scripture)

"The image of a widow as a symbol for the poor who are completely dependent on God is more developed in Luke than in any other Gospel." (Women in the New Testament) "When a woman's husband died in first-century [BC] Jewish communities, the wife was designated a widow, a term with strict social/economic meaning. A 'widow' was a woman no longer under the authority of a male, either her father or her deceased husband." (Women in Scripture)

**Ayres, Myrtle C., "Let It Not Be Said, 'She was a widow,'" Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.67 (10 April 1965), p. 617.**

--In the time of Jesus it was considered a courtesy for one who came upon a funeral procession to join the mourners and follow along with them.

- How glad we can be that in the narrative of the healing of the son of the widow of Nain, as given in the seventh chapter of Luke's Gospel, Jesus did not follow along with the crowd!

---No, he who was in the habit of beholding the perfect man was not influenced by the material evidences of death. Instead, he caused the mourners to stop, and he bade the young man arise.

- The mourners were privileged to see the healing, for the young man was restored to his grieving mother.

--This story is a remarkable illustration of the master Christian's ability to meet human problems, and it gives a dramatic example of his spiritual ability to discern and heal the thought of those in need.

**"Eyes full of joy," Christian Science Monitor (4 April 1988), p. 18.**

--In Christ Jesus' work, didn't every healing correct in some way the evil that others saw?

- Think of the heaviness surrounding the widow of Nain as the pallbearers carried her only son to what everyone believed would be his tomb. Yet Jesus "came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still.....And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak." [Luke 7: 11-15]

---Jesus saw beyond appearances to the spiritual reality of God and man, and this enabled him to restore the widow's son to life.

--Though we're not often faced with this kind of situation, and the Master's healing work is obviously unparalleled, still the same spiritual reality upon which Jesus based his work is available to govern our own perspective powerfully and to bring healing.

- It can throw new light on what we see and can dispel gloom.

### **SECTION V: The Mount of Transfiguration** (Mark 9: 2-10)

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Matt 17:1-9; Luke 9: 28-36

TIME LINE: The Year of Opposition (Jesus' 3<sup>rd</sup> year of ministry)

The dramatic elements help us understand the Transfiguration, especially as it reveals the glory of Christ. It occurred in a dramatic setting (a high mountain) at a dramatic occasion (when Jesus was praying [Luke 9:29]) during a dramatic hour (at night). Darkness heightened the drama of Jesus' shining face and dazzling clothing.

"The precise reference to the amount of time elapsed [*six days*, Matt 17:1] is unusual for Matthew. It seems he is carefully connecting Jesus' promise in 16:28 with the event that immediately follows." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"**Elijah** [Elias] and **Moses** appeared with Jesus [Luke 9:4] because of their close connection with [him] in prophecy." (King James Bible Commentary)

**Peter, and James, and John**

"Luke introduces the inner circle (Peter, James, and John)." (HarperCollins Bible Commentary) The sequence of Peter, John, and James is the order that is followed in the earliest manuscripts. "Peter, James, and John are credited with an especially close relationship to Jesus, and were regarded by the evangelists as the most important of the 12 apostles. These three were alone with him on more than one important event." (King James Bible Commentary)

According to both Mark and Luke, only Peter, James, and John and the parents witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter. Then, in the presence of these five whose faith he could trust, Jesus commanded the child to get up.

"Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a mountain some days after he has given a discourse in response to Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:13-28=Mark 9:2-10=Luke 9:28-36)." (Anchor Bible Dictionary)

Later at Gethsemane, Jesus took with him the disciples closest to him—Peter, James, and John—feeling the need of their prayer during this desperate hour (Matt 26:37). Jesus said, "my soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt 26:38). Jesus then asked them to stay with him, to keep awake, and to "watch" with him, that he might have their support in his challenge.

**Elias/Elijah**

[i li' uhs] ("Yah[weh] is my God")

*"ELIAS. Prophecy; spiritual evidence opposed to material sense; Christian Science, with which can be discerned the spiritual fact of whatever the material senses behold; the basis of immortality. 'Elias truly shall first come and restore all things.' (Matthew xvii. 11.)" [S&H 585: 9-14]*

**(Abbreviated)**

Elias is another name for Elijah. He was a Hebrew prophet and reformer in the northern kingdom of Israel [**Northern Israel/Western Jordan**] during the divided monarchy. Of all the prophets, priests, and sages in the Old Testament, none has kept so vivid a hold on the popular mind as Elijah the Prophet. Elijah, the Tishbite, was an inhabitant of Gilead, the Israelite province east of the Jordan river. He is described as appearing mysteriously from an unknown background, fought as a soldier of the Lord against heathen gods, championed the downtrodden, performed his miracles, and vanished in a blazing chariot....

Elisha became his protégé, and refused to be parted from him in later years. "The last accounts of the prophet are those connected with his ascension (II Kings 2:1-11)." (Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary) When Elijah was picked up by a "whirlwind into heaven," Elisha picked up his fallen mantle and continued his work on earth.

"The New Testament also mentions the reappearance of Elijah in person. Along with Moses, he appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt 17:3)." (Who Was Who in the Bible)

Moses

[Mō'zez] (Egyp. "extraction, a son"/Heb. "drawn from the water")

*"MOSES. A corporeal mortal; moral courage; a type of moral law and the demonstration thereof; the proof that, without the gospel, — the union of justice and affection, — there is something spiritually lacking, since justice demands penalties under the law." (S&H 592: 11)*

**(Abbreviated)**

THE LAW OF MOSES

"The law is a central feature of the Pentateuch and so the lawgiver assumes importance...Moses brought the law engraved on tablets and proclaimed the laws and ordinances that constitute a significant part of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy." (Peloubet's Dictionary) The Mosaic code goes far beyond religious observance in the narrow sense. It deals with political, social, and family affairs in a progressive spirit well in advance of its period.

POSTSCRIPT

"The NT depicts Jesus as essentially affirming Moses' law (e.g., Matt 5:17-20; Luke 16:16-17), citing an apparition of Moses and Elijah as a validation of Jesus (Matt 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36)." (Eerdmans Dictionary)

**Maurer, Eunice F., "Mountains," Christian Science Journal, Vol.42 (September 1924), p. 305.**

--New Testament narratives tell us how constantly Jesus went up into the mountain to pray.

- Yet we cannot imagine that for the human Jesus the ascent was always easy.

---There was a cross to be borne up the mountain; and at the end rock-ribbed walls and a stone to be rolled away (see Science and Health, p.44) before he was freed from the sepulchers of mortal chiseling.

--Again, on the mount of transfiguration, Jesus was transfigured by the consciousness of his unity with the Christ.

- Finally, at the close of the most wonderful career ever fulfilled, Christ Jesus rose to the mountain top, whence he ascended above all mortality into the full realization of heaven—harmony.

**de France, Thomas** (Staff Editor), "**Elijah: A preacher living dangerously,**" PROFILES OF THE PROPHETS, Christian Science Journal, Vol.121 (May 2003), p. 32.

--For most Old Testament prophets, there was never a dull moment.

--Elijah links the Hebrew Scriptures with the New Testament.

- In the New Testament, Elijah appears along with Moses on the mountaintop at Jesus' transfiguration.

---This serves as a confirmation of Jesus' role as the Messiah.

- Perhaps Elijah's most dramatic link to Jesus was established when Elijah ascended into the sky in a whirlwind.

---Jesus' departure, though different in detail, accomplished the same marvel—a direct ascension into heaven.

**Mason, Frank E.** (CSB and Assistant Pastor), “**The Transfiguration,**” Christian Science Journal, Vol.6 (October 1888), p. 331.

--The Transfiguration of our Lord and Master occurred on or near Mount Hermon.

- Though it is not positively known that this mount was the place of the sacred vision witnessed by Peter, James, and John, yet many eminent Bible scholars and commentators, whose judgment is generally accepted, refer to Mount Hermon as the probable site of this remarkable manifestation.

--As the exact locality of the Transfiguration, however, is unknown, there is more or less conjecture concerning it.

--Mount Hermon is the highest mountain in Syria.

- It belongs to the Anti-Lebanon range, and is forty miles north of the Sea of Galilee, and thirty west of Damascus. The ruins of an ancient temple are still visible on its southern promontory.

--Peter, James, and John, from the spiritual height they had attained, saw Jesus anew.

- Heretofore, like the other disciples, they had looked upon him as human; now they saw him in his immortal manhood.

--Moses and Elias were representatives of the Law and Prophets, the acknowledged teachers of the Jewish race.

- Moses represented the Law, Elias the Prophets.

---Thus the Law and the Prophets pointed, as with outstretched fingers, to Jesus. •

Moses signified moral courage, rightful determination in the face of all danger, boldness of purpose.

--Elias prophesied his own culmination in John the Baptist, the type of purity.

- These two, whom the disciples beheld, represented degrees leading to the perfect idea of God: First, Moses, or moral courage; second, Elias, or purity; third, Jesus, the perfect idea of God.

### *BIBLIOGRAPHY*

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

\*The weekly Lesson-Sermons 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.