

Bible Characters for Your Weekly Bible Study

Compiled by Lt Gen C. Norman Wood, USAF (Ret), Burke, VA 22015

For week of August 23 - 29, 2010

SUBJECT: CHRIST JESUS

Smith, Lark Garges, “Jesus and his parables,” INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE, Part One, Sentinel, Vol.99 (26 May 1997), p. 10. **[SUGGESTED SUNDAY SCHOOL ACTIVITY]**

--Picture yourself in one of the crowds that gathered to hear Jesus teach.

• Perhaps you're up in the hills near your town, or on the shore of a lake. Or maybe you're in a courtyard, or even on the street outside someone's house, listening through an open door. What are you expecting to happen?

--You may have heard about the wonderful healing work Jesus has been doing.

--Jesus used simple examples from everyday life to help people understand what he was teaching them.

--A simple story...that teaches a moral or religious lesson is called a *parable*.

--...the Bible tells of at least thirty times when Jesus explained what he meant with a parable. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record some of his parables; John does not.

RESPONSIVE READING: *Simon says Jesus is the Son of God, and his name is changed to Peter* (Matt 16: 13-18 [to ;], 19 [to 1st :])

RELATED SCRIPTURE: Jer 23:5; 33:15,16

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)

“The Jewish people of first-century Palestine, including the 12 disciples, have an expectation of a coming Messiah.” (KJV Standard Lesson 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)

“The Greek word used for ‘rock’ (Gr *petra*) is played against the name Peter (Gr *petros*) in the original [*Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church*, Matt 16:18]. The Roman Catholic interpretation of this passage is that Peter was the foundation stone of the church, that he had primacy among the apostles, that he became Bishop of Rome, and that his primacy was passed on to his successors the popes.” (King James 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. The event has been occasioned by the rejection of Jesus by so many in Israel, including Israel's leaders, a rejection chronicled in the previous chapters." (Oxford Bible Commentary)

Jesus

[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)

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 and Fundamental Principles

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)

The Centurion's servant healed (Luke 7:2-10)

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/Luke 4:30-32)

Parable of the Leaven (Matt 13: 33)

Parable of the Goodly Pearl (Matt 13:45, 46)

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

The Year of Opposition and Development

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 (Matt 16: 13-17/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)

Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

Parable of the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-17)

The 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/Mark 10:17-31)

Healing Two Blind Men (Mark 10:46-52)

THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR (Passion Week)

Tuesday and Wednesday

Discourse on signs and coming events (Mark 13:14-37)

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' 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 called some people to follow him and to give up everything in order to do so (Mark 1: 16-20)." (Eerdmans Dictionary) "After Jesus had begun his ministry, he chose 12 men to live and work with him as his close disciples." (Complete Bible handbook) He selected these 12 Apostles to go out and proclaim the kingdom of God throughout the Jewish districts of Galilee. "There were also women followers and disciples who went with Jesus in Galilee and on to Jerusalem." (Ibid)

During the last phase of his life, he went to Jerusalem with the twelve disciples to continue to preach the message of the kingdom of God. During the week before Passover Jesus taught each day in the temple area, debating with other teachers of differing beliefs. He was invited to state his opinion on a number of issues, including the question of paying taxes to the Roman emperor. This was a test question with the Zealots. His answer angered those who followed the Zealot line, and they feared repercussion from Rome. Because Jesus continued to have the enthusiasm of the people, they decided to arrest him to foreclose on the possibility of an uprising among the people. He was betrayed by the disciple Judas; was arrested, tried, and convicted by the Roman governor, Pilate. Death by crucifixion was the penalty for sedition by one who was not a Roman citizen....

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) "Jeremiah [is] mentioned by name, presumably since he was often listed first among the so-called 'later prophets' in Jewish canon." (Peake's Commentary) The "importance of *Jeremiah* [appears] in the nonbiblical 2 Maccabees 2:1-8; 15:14,15, written during the time between the Old and New Testaments. The reappearance of *Elijah* is expected to precede the Messianic age (Malachi 4:5,6)...The two Old Testament prophets specifically mentioned are connected with the Messiah." (KJV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Simon Peter

(See Section V, below)

Swan, Mrs. Carolyn B. (CSB and Associate Editor), "**Jesus and Christ: Who Was Jesus?,"** EDITORIAL, Sentinel, Vol. 87 (4 March 1985), p. 367.

--Some people believe that Jesus was God.

- Some believe he was just another prophet.
- Some consider his virgin birth and resurrection as symbolic rather than literal.

---Conflicting views of Jesus may well set Christians everyone to searching for accurate information about this most remarkable of all men.

--The Bible is not the only record that shows that Jesus of Nazareth did indeed exist.

--Accepting the virgin birth of Jesus is really fundamental to accepting his teachings and to demonstrating scientific Christian healing.

- In setting aside the common beliefs about conception, the virgin birth epitomizes the entire power of Spirit, God, to set aside all the so-called laws of matter. So important did Mrs. Eddy consider this that she wrote, following an acknowledgment of the virgin birth, "*Christian Science shows clearly that God is the only generating or regenerating power.*" ('01 9: 4)

"The Christ," SIGNS OF THE TIMES, Sentinel, Vol. 23 (9 October 1920), p. 114. (*The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, U.S.A., Jan. 3, 1920)

--Every reader of the Bible remembers the famous occasion, at Caesarea Philippi, when Christ Jesus put to the disciples the question, staggering in its implication, "*Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*" and every one remembers equally well the indeterminate nature of the reply, "*Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.*"

- The answer, in any case, made it perfectly clear that the "common people" had failed utterly to grasp the teaching of the Christ, and were accounting for the mighty works of the carpenter of Nazareth on a purely superstitious or necromantic basis, in accordance with much of the popular thought of the day.

---Then it was that Jesus turned suddenly to the disciples themselves, with the same question, "*But whom say ye that I am?*" a demand which brought from Peter the instantaneous answer, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"

Barris, J. Allen, "**Thou art the Christ,**" Journal, Vol. 34 (February 1917), p. 629.

--All down through the ages the Master's sayings and their interpretations have been the subject of a multitude of discussions and have formed the basis of many different creeds and denominations.

- His message is reflected to some degree in every advancing step of civilization.

--It was shortly after his experience in Capernaum that we find him preaching at Caesarea Philippi.

- His efforts to make himself understood here must have met with even less success than elsewhere, for we find him testing the effects of his preaching by asking his disciples, "*Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*" Their answer seems to have been anything but encouraging, for we find him replying to them with the question, "*But whom say ye that I am?*" Peter's simple and direct answer to this, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,*" must have filled him with joy and compensated to a large extent for his disappointment in the uncertain answers of the others.

Wallace, Mary Stone, "**Upon this Rock of Truth,**" POEM, Journal, Vol. 64 (June 1946), p. 278.

As Truth is true, immutable, supreme,
Upon this rock of Truth we build our house,
The consciousness of ever-present good.

Though storms assail and rains descend in floods,
Fear not; your dwelling place in Christ abides.
Rejoice! Your house is founded on the rock!

SECTIONS II: The price of discipleship (Matt 8: 19, 20)

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

“a certain scribe”

“Scribes were distinguished professional people throughout the ancient world....In the New Testament, scribes are described functioning as lawyers and judges, and they are shown arguing with Jesus over legal matters—authority to forgive, traditions of the elders, dietary laws, purity laws, interpretation of scripture, and Sabbath observance.” (Oxford Guide to People & Places)

“As a scribe, this man was breaking with his fellow scribes by publicly declaring his willingness to follow Jesus. Nonetheless, Jesus evidently knew that he had not counted the cost in terms of suffering and inconvenience.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

“The first [time], vv. 19-20, in which a scribe addresses Jesus as ‘teacher’ (not ‘Lord’) and is not asked to follow, may offer a negative illustration, whereas the second [instance], vv. 21-2, in which Jesus is called ‘Lord; and issues the call, ‘Follow me,’ may offer a positive illustration. V. 20 could allude to Ps 8: ‘the Son of Man,’ who has nowhere to lay his head, in truth has all things under his feet, including the birds of the air.” (Oxford Bible Commentary)

Miles [Maupon], Madelon M., “Jesus—a leader worth following,” BIBLE FORUM, Journal, Vol. 122 (October 2004), p. 41.

--National elections inevitably mean conversations about leadership.

- What makes someone a good leader?
- Are leadership qualities innate or can they be learned?

Challenging the process

--Jesus challenged the religious authorities of his day, denouncing their ingrained piousness and legalistic interpretation of Jewish law.

Inspiring a shared vision

--...he demonstrated the overwhelming goodness of the creation that God made.

Enabling others to act

--Jesus didn't keep this healing power to himself.

- He shared it with others.

Modeling the way

--Jesus' life was a model of the love he taught.

Encouraging the heart

--Both before and after his crucifixion, Jesus led his students by encouragement.

WAGERS, RALPH E. (CSB, Lecturer, Associate Editor, Normal Class Teacher, and President), “Not where to lay his head,” EDITORIAL, Journal, Vol. 81 (June 1963), p. 316.

--A cost is involved in taking forward spiritual footsteps.

• But such progress also has its compensation; and as spiritual values become more and more worthwhile to us, we inevitably gain more than we lose.

---Spiritual growth brings an enrichment that nothing else can.

• And one who strives for and experiences such development is at peace wherever he may be or under whatever circumstances he may be living.

--A certain scribe said to Christ Jesus (Matt. 8:19), “*Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.*”

--Jesus replied, “*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*”

--Perhaps the Master used this striking illustration to point out that one who follows him will not find rest or lasting satisfaction in any material doctrine.

Jesus and the parable of the rich young ruler (Mark 10: 17-22)

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Matt 19: 16-30; Luke 18: 18-30

TIME LINE: The Last Months

One day an earnest, impulsive young man ran to Jesus and knelt on the road to worship him (Mark 10:17). He “asks about eternal life—the life of the age to come. Jesus suggests that he sell all and follow him, and the man departs grieving ([Mark] 10:17-22).” Theological Bible Commentary)

This story of the rich young man is told in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Matthew’s version is more objective, and scholars suggest that this is because Matthew did not wish to ascribe human emotion to Jesus.

“Luke calls the man a ‘ruler’ which means he could have been either a member of the Sanhedrin, or a ruler of the synagogue.” (Dummelow Commentary) In [Matt] v.16 he addresses Jesus as *Good Master* (or, Teacher), “this way of addressing Jesus does not necessarily recognize His deity. The young man simply means that Christ is righteous and a teacher from God who apparently has eternal life and might know how he could get it.” (MacArthur Commentary)

“The incident is a striking example of the seductive power of wealth. The young man was so good, and so near to the Kingdom of God...and yet he failed, because though he loved the Kingdom much, he loved money more.” (Dummelow Commentary)

“The disciples...wonder, ‘Who, then, can be saved?’ Peter speaks for them all, reminding Jesus that they have left everything to follow him.” (On Your Mark) “The disciples had done what the rich man would not do [*we have left all, and followed thee*, Luke v.28].” (People’s NT Commentary) Jesus seeks to give them heart and hope....The kingdom will return everything a hundredfold to God’s children.” (On Your Mark)

“one running”/the Rich Young Ruler

“This figure is traditionally known as the rich young ruler, though ‘young’ is found only in Matthew and ‘ruler’ only in Luke. Since the man is a Palestinian Jew, ‘ruler’ cannot mean ‘king,’ but refers to a local official. In [Luke] 8:41 the same word is translated ‘leader’ (of the synagogue), in [Luke] 12:58 ‘magistrate,’ in [Luke] 14:1 ‘leader’ (of the Pharisees). Luke’s addition of the word to his Markan source places the man among the ‘powerful’ of this world (see [Luke] 1:52-53).” (People’s NT Commentary) “The true version is clearly that of Mk and Lk.” (Dummelow Commentary)

Ker Seymer, Miss Violet (CSB, Lecturer, and Associate Editor), “**Kneeling**,” EDITORIAL, Sentinel, Vol. 40 (2 October 1937), p. 90.

--In Mark’s Gospel we read, “*There came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life.*”

- This running and kneeling appeared to denote humility and eagerness.

---Yet when the one sometimes referred to as the rich young man was asked to exchange his earthly treasures for “*treasure in heaven*,” “*he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*”

- His kneeling, then, belied his mental attitude, which in one vital respect proved idolatrous and recalcitrant when put to the test.

---In spite of the good traits for which Jesus loved and commended this young man, he could not surrender his pride of possession at the Master's bidding.

- At that point he could not yet bow the knee.

--Christ Jesus said that "*they that worship him [God] must worship him in spirit and in truth.*"

- True worship requires us to give up the counterfeit worship of persons and things; also selfishness, doubt, and fear.

Early, Anne (Newton, MA), "**Eternal life is not just a platitude,**" GETTING BEYOND JUST GETTING BY, Sentinel, Vol. 106 (12 April 2004), p. 20.

--Most people probably don't think much from one day to the next about life being eternal.

- They may accept it as a premise, or a promise, but unless they're facing the loss of a loved one, or some life-or-death situation—or the deeper questioning that comes out of catastrophic moments—most of us are inclined to leave the question of immortality for a later time.

--...if life truly is eternal, then it is not a series of stops and starts, births and deaths, beginnings and endings.

- It is a continuum. And if God is the source of life—is actually Life itself—then that continuum must be the continuation of good, because God is good.

--Good is continuous.

- It comes from God. Good can never die, and can never be taken from us.

Parable of the Pearl of Great Price (Matt 13: 45 *the*, 46

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

"a merchant man"

"In the first-century Mediterranean world, the pearl was often a symbol of the highest good (as diamonds sometimes are in modern Western culture). The advent of the kingdom, sought for or not, brings about a reversal of values leading to the crucial action that obtains the new. It is this action, puzzling and out of step with those who live by the old values, that is central in each of these parables." (Peoples NT Commentary)

Scherf, Martha H., "**The Kingdom of Heaven,**" POEM, Journal, Vol. 82 (September 1964), p. 483.

The kingdom of heaven is not silent.
As our mortal sense becomes quiet and still,
Then sweeter by far than a thousand choirs,
The voice of harmony, echoing God's will,
Consoling, commanding, inspires.

The kingdom of heaven is not empty.
With living ideas of the infinite One,
Its universe teems, in power unfurling,
With the cosmic force of a million suns
And the tenderness of a leaf uncurling.

The kingdom of heaven is not beyond,
For time and space are by mortals sought.

Now, nearer to us than our hidden fear,
No farther away than our present thought,
The kingdom of heaven is—here!

Ballantyne, Helen (CS), “**The ‘pearl of great price,’**” Journal, Vol. 119 (June 2001), p. 42.

--During the many years I’ve been a student of Christian Science, I’ve observed that, almost invariably, the people who accept the message of Christian Science with their whole heart are those who have experienced a severe testing—some enormous hurt or injustice or illness—and then triumphed over that challenge through persistent prayer.

--Recently it occurred to me that the spiritual growth that comes out of difficult circumstances like this might be compared to the oyster, which, when irritated by a foreign element, often forms a lovely pearl.

• Jesus made this comparison in a sweet way, when he said, “*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*” [Matt 13: 45,46]

--Whenever I’ve been faced with hardships, I’ve found that I long for something higher, better, more meaningful.

SECTION III: Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 30-35 *A certain, 37 Go*)

TIME LINE: The Year of Opposition and Development (Jesus’ 3rd year of ministry), 29 AD.

CAST OF CHARACTERS: (none of them “named”)

A certain lawyer: “A scribe who was supposedly an expert in the Law of God.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

The Thieves: They are the demons who beset our path and strip us of virtue, and wound us spiritually by causing us to sin.

A certain priest: The priest is a symbol for the law given by Abraham and Moses.

A Levite: A temple assistant, he represents the teachings of the prophets, and the symbol of sacrifice reminding us of Aaron. “These were from the tribe of Levi, but not descendants of Aaron.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

A certain Samaritan: Also a Jew and a foreigner: Christ himself, the divine Physician. He is ceremonially unclean, socially an outcast, and religiously a heretic. But he is unselfish, concerned, attentive, and caring, pouring in the wine (“understanding”) and oil (“consecration, charity, gentleness”) of healing compassion.

The Innkeeper: The inn represents the church where healing occurs, and the innkeeper represents the leadership of the church. The two pence represent the Old and New Testaments.

“This story that has become well known in the culture quite apart from the Bible has an obvious meaning that must not be lost: the way of God is the way of compassion and active help for those in need, even at personal risk, even against cultural expectations of what is proper.” (Peoples NT Commentary)

In this story, the thieves beat him up; the priest and Levite pass him up; and the Samaritan picks him up. The thieves believe that what’s yours is mine—they take; the priest and the Levite believe

what's mine is mine—they keep, and the Samaritan believes what's mine is yours—he shares, and healing results. (Adapted from the King James Bible Commentary)

Hellman, Matthew, “**Live to Love**,” THE POWER OF JESUS’ PARABLES, *Journal*, Vol. 125 (June 2007), p. 40.

--The book of Luke says that a certain lawyer tested Jesus, asking, “*Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*”

- When Jesus threw the question back to him and asked the man what he thought the answer might be, the lawyer responded by saying that Jewish law stated, “*And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*”

---The lawyer then asked Jesus, “*And who is my neighbor?*”

- In reply, Jesus told the man a parable—the parable of the good Samaritan (see Luke 10:25-37).

---Today, even the thousands of years later, this story has given me such inspiration.

Moore, Mrs. Elise L. (CSB and Lecturer; Nashville, TN), “**Spiritual Preparation and the Good Samaritan**,” WHERE IS GOD IN A ME-FIRST WORLD?, *Journal*, Vol. 125 (November 2007), p. 44.

--The good Samaritan (see Luke 10: 30-37) provides a practical example of loving our neighbor as ourselves. The account tells of a Jewish man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho who was robbed, brutally beaten, and abandoned. Three travelers—or could we say, three types of thought—came upon the scene. The first traveler, a priest, was so occupied with his own full plate of daily tasks that he took no time to investigate this stranger’s need. We could say he represents self-absorption, busyness, maybe even self-righteousness.

--The second man, a Levite, did stop. Was he afraid to become involved, fearing that the responsibility would overwhelm him? Whatever his reasoning, the Levite left without even a word of encouragement. This type of thought we might call indifference.

--Then the Samaritan arrived. The Samaritan represented a higher—a spiritual—view. Although Samaritans and Jews were enemies, this Samaritan didn’t see this man as an enemy.

Coolidge, John, “**Where he was**,” *Sentinel*, Vol. 33 (6 June 1931), p. 786.

--The parable of the good Samaritan has long been regarded as a description of a simple act of human kindness or neighborliness to one in need, and as narrated by Jesus in explanation of the word “neighbor.”

- With the understanding of the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures as revealed in the Christian Science textbook, “*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*” by Mary Baker Eddy, there comes an enlarged and much more beautiful sense of the true meaning of the neighborliness of the ministering Christ, Truth.

--In our traveling along the pathway of mortal existence, we sometimes fall among the thieving thoughts of mortal mind, which appear to strip us of the garments of Truth and leave us with wounds designated as disease, sorrow, suffering, lack, or some other evil in the long list of discords mankind knows so well.

- The priest and the Levite, represented as passing by on the other side, typify the inability or unwillingness of false theological and material beliefs to bring to the grieved and troubled human sense any of the saving Christ, Truth, the effect of which is always to heal.

“**Why we’re here**,” *Monitor* (14 January 2000), p. 23.

--Jesus' parable of the man who "went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead" has a meaning for me every day in New York (see Luke 10:25-37).

- Who was the good Samaritan? "*He that shewed mercy on him.*"
- What was the message to Jesus' followers? "*Go, and do thou likewise.*"

--Mary Baker Eddy said the first demand of Christian Science is: "*Thou shalt have no intelligence, no life, no substance, no truth, no love, but that which is spiritual. The second is like unto it. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'*" (Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, pg. 467).

• She also wrote, "*What we most need is the prayer of fervent desire for growth in grace, expressed in patience, meekness, love, and good deeds*" (pg. 4).

--The good news is that our ability to do this comes from God.

- As the Bible shows, God is Love itself—the incorporeal, divine Spirit that is always with us.
 - We are the perfect children, the image and likeness, of Love.
 - We are by God's nature spiritual and heavenly-minded.

Proctor, Martha Bailey, "The Jericho Road," Journal, Vol. 45 (1943), p. 531.

I might be the one on the Jericho road,
Robbed, wounded, and left to die;
Or I might have passed by on the other side,
Pride and disdain in my eye.
But I may be the one from Samaria,
Who cares for his brother's woe:
He is calling now on the Jericho road;
He is calling, and I must go!

SECTION IV: Jesus heals the Centurion's servant of sickness during his ministry in Galilee (Luke 7: 2, 3, 6-10)

PARALLEL GOSPEL: Matt 8: 5-13

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

This story is told in both Matthew (8:5-13) and Luke (7:1-10); it is not the same as the Nobleman's son in John. "Mark does not tell this incident in his narrative." (Abingdon Bible Commentary) "A Lukan section begins here and extends to 9:51, where Jesus resolves to go to Jerusalem." (Peoples NT Commentary)

"The relationship between Jesus and those in need continues in the story concerning a non-Jew, a centurion in the Roman army stationed at Capernaum, a city which was Jesus' home (Matt 4:13) and a customs post on the route to Damascus (9:9)." (Eerdmans Commentary) MacArthur says the centurion was "a Roman military officer who commanded (v.9) one hundred men." However, the King James Bible Commentary says the "centurion was a rank between that of an officer and a non-commissioned officer (somewhat equivalent to that of a modern sergeant-major)." "That he loved the Jewish nation and built a synagogue indicates he was a 'God-fearer,' one who was 'at the gate,' but not a convert to Judaism (cf. Cornelius, Acts 10:1-2)." (HarperCollins Commentary)

The centurion must have been a wealthy man. In Matthew, the centurion approaches Jesus himself; in Luke he appeals by "*elders of the Jews*", and, after sending them, is seized with further scruples, and sends more "*friends*." This appeal by the Jews "for the centurion as for a benevolent friend is typical Lucan." (Peake's Commentary)

"Sometimes faith was involved in the Lord's healings [*as thou hast believed*, Matt 8:13], (but in this case not by the person being healed, as also with healings in 9:2 and 15:28); other times it was not a factor (vv.14-16; Luke 22:51)." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

“the centurion”

Centurion was "the rank designated for the commander of a Roman *centuria*, a subdivision of a cohort." (Eerdmans Dictionary) "This centurion was probably in the [police] service of Herod Antipas." (Abingdon Bible Commentary) "The centurion's tender concern for a lowly slave was contrary to the reputation Roman army officers had acquired in Israel." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

“a centurion's servant”

A servant is "a person employed or otherwise bound to serve and discharge duties for another. Many servants mentioned in the Bible are clearly not slaves, but in a form of dependent labor different from actual chattel slavery." (Eerdmans Dictionary) "The centurion intervenes on behalf of his *pais*, which in Greek means 'young boy' in the sense of either a son or a slave who is a house servant." (Eerdmans Commentary) "The servant knew of the appeal to Jesus, and his faith helped the cure." (Abingdon Bible Commentary)

Harrison, Christine, "**Health Care**," *Sentinel*, Vol. 74 (26 February 1972), p. 356.

--"The truth is," writes Harold M. Schmecker., in the *New York Times*, "no one really wants health care at all; what everyone wants is health."

--Christ Jesus offered the world a health plan that is both preventative and curative, and showed how mankind can lay the foundations of perfect, enduring health.

--The centurion's faith in the all-presence of God's power enabled him to set aside the belief that healing required the physical presence of Jesus.

• On the contrary, the officer sent messengers with this request: "*Say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.*" [Luke 7:7,8]

--Evidently the centurion recognized his own power in Palestine as primarily the power of imperial Rome, and he recognized the authority of Christ Jesus as the manifestation of the omnipotent power of God.

Tosto, Mario (CSB and Lecturer), "**What the centurion saw—the authority behind Christian healing**," *Journal*. Vol. 114 (November 1996), p. 5.

--Luke's Gospel records a remarkable encounter between Christ Jesus and emissaries from a Roman army commander, a centurion.

• They conveyed his urgent request that Jesus heal his seriously ill servant. He was told the centurion expected that Jesus could effect the healing without being physically present with the sick person.

--Jesus was so impressed with this response that he used the occasion to rebuke and instruct his countrymen—and all who doubt the power of God to heal.

--What did this centurion know about God that made his faith "*so great*" that it excelled that of all but a few of the chosen people to whom Jesus addressed his primary mission?

--The hope-inspiring implication of the centurion's insight was that Jesus knew the way reality works, and therefore how to restore health and harmony through the supremacy of God.

Bucher, Herbert, "[Present or Absent Treatment](#)," *Sentinel*, Vol.55 (11 July 1953), p. 1202.

--A practitioner of Christian Science was asked by a friend newly interested in Science, "Which is more efficacious, present or absent treatment?"

- The friend was assured that Christian Scientists know from experience that both are equally effective.

--In "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" Mary Baker Eddy says (p.179), "*Science can heal the sick, who are absent from their healers, as well as those present, since space is no obstacle to Mind.*"

- It must be clear then, that the distinction made by Christian Scientists between what they term absent and present treatments simply indicates either the absence or the presence of the patient, not of the treatment itself; nor does it indicate the place from which it is given.

--It is worthy of note that nowhere in her writings does our revered Leader use the term absent treatment or present treatment. In the true scientific sense, treatment is always present, for the healing Christ is everywhere and heals irrespective of the mortal belief in place, space, or time. There is no absence of Mind or of Mind-power. A Christian Science treatment declares the eternal, spiritual perfectness of man in the image and likeness of God.

Shaffer, Suzanne C., "[Under Divine Authority](#)," *BIBLE STUDY, Journal*, Vol. 117 (July 1999), p. 37.

--The first chapter of Genesis presents the spiritual truth of creation; it points to the immortal, perfect nature of the creator-God, Spirit. This account describes man as made in the image and likeness of God. It says further that God beheld His creation as "*very good.*"

--I wrote down characteristics of man as he's described in Genesis, chapter one.

- For, instance he is created in God's image.
- He is blessed by God.
- He is given dominion.

--It appears that the centurion understood, respected, and honored not only the power of authority in the Roman army, but also the divine authority that underlay Jesus' healing works.

--This realization can only bring wholeness, joy, and dominion to my life. As I continue to ponder the deeper implications of what it means to live under divine authority, I've gained greater well-being and peace. Through such insight, you can, too!

SECTION V: Jesus explains to Peter how to forgive through the parable of the unmerciful servant
(Matt 18: 21-33)

TIME LINE: The Year of Opposition and Development (Jesus' 3rd year of ministry), on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, 29 AD.

"Jesus' fourth great discourse focuses on the kind of community and practices the disciples will need to sustain their distinctive witness in a world beset by debt, domination, and violence (18:1-35)." (Theological Bible Commentary)

"Peter responds to Jesus' teaching with a question concerning the limits of forgiveness (Matt 18:21)....The concluding parable of the sermon (18:23-35) starkly contrasts the mercy and forgiveness proper to God's rule with unjust and irresponsible lack of care for others. References to the kingdom at

the beginning of the sermon (18:1-4) and here at the end (v.23) form a thematic inclusion which holds it together.” (Eerdmans Commentary)

When Peter says "Up to seven times" in v. 21, he "thinks he is being magnanimous. The rabbis, citing several verses from Amos (1:3,6,9,11,13), taught that since God forgave Israel's enemies only three times, it was presumptuous and unnecessary to forgive anyone more than three times." (MacArthur Commentary)

“This is the first of the parables in which God appears in His character of King. We are the servants.” (Trench)

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) “Who Was Who in the Bible” says, "Why Jesus called Simon a 'rock' is not altogether clear. Peter's character was not always rock-like, as his denial of Jesus indicates." However, “All the People in the Bible” states, “The giving of a cognomen was taken very seriously in those days, so it would seem that Jesus recognized Peter’s strength of character despite his flaws and was willing to establish him as a source of strength to the others.”....

[the slave] “**his wife, and children**”

“Discussing forgiveness, Jesus tells of a king who orders his indebted slave to be sold “together with his wife and children.” It is unlikely that the money accrued for the sale would cover the slave’s debt of ten thousand talents. The practice of selling family members to creditors appears in Israelite (compare 2 Kgs 4:1) and Roman contexts.” (Women in Scripture)

Cronk, Addington Charles, “**The Kingdom of Heaven**,” *Journal*, Vol. 42 (August 1924), p. 265.

--On several recorded occasions Jesus gave verbal expression to what he knew the kingdom of heaven to be like.

- The illustrations he used were given with the assurance of positive knowledge.

--Mary Baker Eddy, on page 560 of "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," writes: "*Heaven represents harmony, and divine Science interprets the Principle of heavenly harmony. The great miracle, to human sense, is divine Love, and the grand necessity of existence is to gain the true idea of what constitutes the kingdom of heaven in man.*"

- Could anything be put more plainly or more helpful?

---From the above it is seen how important it is that a right understanding of the kingdom of heaven be gained, in order that we may truly understand existence and keep God's commandments.

- An ignorant, mortal, inharmonious sense of things must be arrested and corrected, and human thinking must be based upon what is divinely true.

Jandron, Francis Lyster (CSB, Lecturer, CSPS Trustee, and Director), "**Until seventy times seven,**" Journal, Vol. 43 (April 1925), p. 720.

--Most men will agree that human forbearance and loving-kindness find their highest expression in willingness to forgive.

- But human pardon is sometimes abused, as even faltering worldly experience teaches. The only veritable forgiveness, Mrs. Eddy points out in "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" (p.497), consists in "*the destruction of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal.*"

---The disciple Peter was familiar with Jesus' teachings on this point; but, like many today, he was slow to acknowledge that true forgiveness must involve such a purification of one's own thinking as will disarm an offense of all its supposed power to harm. "*Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?*" he inquired.

- The Master's reply clearly indicates that, regardless of even a continually repeated occasion of offense, the refusal to accord reality to it must be persisted in until nothing remains to be forgiven: "*I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.*"

Cook [Hovnanian], Mrs. Louise Knight Wheatley (CSB and Lecturer), "**Peter, the Impetuous,**" Sentinel, Vol. 40 (2 April 1938), p. 603.

--Among the disciples who were with Jesus during the three memorable years of his ministry, Peter seemed continually to be battling against certain unfortunate peculiarities of character, which ever appeared to stand in the way of his progress.

- For Peter, humanly speaking, was one of those who seemed to possess what the world terms a natural proclivity for making mistakes. He might be called "Peter, the impetuous," acting upon impulse, jumping at conclusions, always trying to take advanced positions beyond his power to maintain. This may well apply to some of those later followers of the Christ, who express today that same zeal without wisdom which seemed to characterize Peter.

--If any such who read this may still, perhaps, be smarting under the memory of an impulsive step unwisely taken, and quickly seen to be wrong, let them find comfort in remembering how Jesus loved this erratic student, Peter.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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

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

The Golden Text this week is from the *New Living Translation* (NLT).

“The NLT is a thoroughgoing revision of the [*Living Bible*] that shifts what was a one-man paraphrase to what is now a genuine team effort, a translation in the meaning-driven mold undertaken over a seven-year period by some ninety American and British scholars....the revisers worked from the original Hebrew and Greek.” (User’s Guide to Bible Translations)