

Bible Characters for Your Weekly Bible Study

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For week of August 30 – September 5, 2010

SUBJECT: MAN

Rockwood, Caroline Washburn, POEM: From Our Contributors, “**The Real Man**,” Christian Science Sentinel, Vol. 4 (5 June 1902), p. 644.

OUT of all mists,
 Into all Light;
Out of all wrong,
 Into the Right;
Out of things false,
 Into the true;
Out of death's clutch,
 Into Life new.

Turning from doubt;
 Steadfast in hope;
Radiant with joy;
 Mighty in scope;
Upright and strong;
 Selfless and wise,
Must the real man,
 Triumphant, rise.

SECTION I: David reflects on God's greatness and goodness, and the true dominion of man (Ps 8: 1, 4-6)

RELATED SCRIPTURE: Gen 1: 26-28

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: A Psalm written by David to the chief musician, to be accompanied by a stringed instrument in the style of *gittith* (probably the style of music in the region of Gath [**modern Israel, 12 mi east of Ashdod**]). Although expressed c. 1000, it is dated at least from the period of 2nd Isaiah, mid-6th century BC.

“Psalm 8...stands out for its high view of humankind. Before God's sovereign status and the vastness of the universe, the psalmist asks plaintively ‘What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?’ (v.4).” (Theological Bible Commentary)

God's name and God's nature were understood to be inseparable [*how excellent is thy name*, v.1].

“the son of man”

“In the Greek of the Septuagint [the son of man] appears only in the undetermined form, which, similar to the Hebrew original..., conveys a generic meaning synonymous with ‘man,’ that is, human being.” (Oxford Guide to People & Places)

Macdonald, George, “**The Son of Man**,” POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol. 16 (May 1898), p. 106.

I SEE a simple, truthful man,
 Who walks the earth erect,
Nor stoops His noble head to one
 From fear or false respect.

He seeks to climb no high estate,
 No low consent secure,
With high and low serenely great,
 Because His ends are pure.

Nor walks alone, beyond our reach,
 Our joy and grief beyond;
He counts it joy divine to teach
 When human hearts respond....

Hid in His heart some spring of grace
 Flowed silent through the din;
The sorrow-cloud upon His face,
 Was lighted from within....

WAGERS, RALPH E. (CSB, Lecturer, Associate Editor, Normal Class Teacher, and President), “**Improving Leisure Time**,” EDITORIAL, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol. 66 (8 August 1964), p. 1389.

--Many statements in the Bible are directed to awaken us to our true spiritual selfhood.

- In the eighth Psalm we read: “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?...Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.”

--Of the seven synonymous terms for Deity that appear regularly in the terminology of Christian Science--Principle, Mind, Soul, Spirit, Life, Truth, Love--the word Soul has special significance in bringing out a true sense of oneself.

--Under the control of moral law, the physical is kept in a subordinate position, in which the body is servant, not master.

--...the moral is the application of the spiritual to relative human situations in which good is proved to be superior to evil.

- The moral and spiritual have a regulating and transforming effect upon the mental and physical.

SECTION II: Jabez, a descendant of Judah who was not a Royal (I Chron 4: 10)

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: “Jewish tradition strongly favors Ezra the priest (cf. Ezra 7:1-6) as the ‘chronicler.’ These records were most likely recorded c. 450-430 BC.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary) The record itself is from c. 1000 BC.

“The first part of this chapter deals with the sons of Judah (vv.1-23)....” (Oxford Bible Commentary)

“Since most of the names and the incidents referred to are otherwise quite unknown to us, it is impossible to place this material within our overall picture of ancient Israel....It seems as if a variety of fragmentary information has been assembled here as part of the larger intention of showing the significance of the whole community.” (Eerdmans Commentary)

Jabez

[Jā’biz] (Heb. “trouble, sorrow”)

Jabez was the head of a family of the tribe “of Judah, of whom it is recorded that ‘*God granted him that which he requested.*’” (Easton Bible Dictionary) He was “noted for his honorable character.” (Who Was Who in the Bible) “He illustrates the power of prayer.” (Holman Dictionary)

Bayless, Mary Gertrude, “**Enlarge my coast,**” Christian Science Journal, Vol. 85 (February 1967), p. 73.

--Hidden in the middle of nine chapters of genealogical lists in I Chronicles, almost as if to show a way out of genealogical boundaries, is an account of a man, Jabez, whose prayer averted the curse of an ominous name.

--Jabez in Hebrew means “trouble” or “sorrow.”

- His mother had named him thus, “because” she said, “I bare him with sorrow.” [I Chron 4:9]

---By giving him the ominous name which identified him wherever he went, she bound him with her own concept of him.

- Like Jabez, little mortals are conceived by other mortals—their form, size, and intelligence partly determined by a genetic code before they know enough to protest.

---Physical conception forms one of the limits bounding the mortal self.

Pogson, Reuben (CS), “**The Prayer of Jabez,**” Christian Science Sentinel, Vol. 7 (25 February 1905), p. 404.

--It is quite possible that no man has ever had his history written so tersely and yet so fully as Jabez.

- The very brevity and sweet simplicity of the story as told in...two verses fixes it in ones memory, where a longer narration would have defeated the purpose desired by the narrator.

---Like the 91st Psalm and other exquisite portions of Scripture, it tells right at the outset the reason for the ensuing success.

- The first line tells of his high aspiration and attainment, and its reward appears in the last.

---The value of the story is increased in view of the complexity and falsity of much of our modern civilization.

--The story of Jabez is told so briefly, the answer to his prayer is placed so close to the cry for help, that one might easily run away with the idea that the result came very quickly; but I don't think it did.

SECTION III: Jesus feeds the 5,000 (Matt 14: 14-21)

RELATED SCRIPTURE: Matt 15: 32-39

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Mark 6: 35-44; Luke 9: 12-17; John 6: 5-14

TIME LINE: The Year of Opposition and Development (Jesus' 3rd year of ministry), April, 29 AD, at the Sea of Galilee.

“Matthew's two stories of miraculous feedings (14:13-21; 15: 32-39) emphasize the importance of meals as the locus of God's presence, power, and abundance.” (Theological Bible Commentary)

The “desert place” or wilderness is the setting for a miraculous feeding, the only Galilean miracle of Jesus narrated in all four Gospels. Matthew links this withdrawal to the news of John's death, but in Mark the motive is the need of the disciples for rest after their mission. In Mark they are called “apostles” only here and in 3:14. Another motive is the pressure of the crowd which Mark alone records. “Only the Fourth Gospel underlines...the crowd's interest in Jesus' signs.” (Oxford Commentary)

For Mark the story of the feeding is quite certainly miraculous, and so it was interpreted down to comparatively recent times. “Jesus knew they did not have enough food to feed the crowd.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary) The narratives draw on the double symbolism of food as teaching and as nourishment. Jesus first teaches the crowds many things and then satisfies their hunger. “As with all the signs in this gospel, the feeding of the multitude points to the denouement in Jesus' death and resurrection.” (Interpreter's One-volume Commentary)

“women and children”

“Following the first miraculous feeding, Matthew alone among the Gospel's notes that five thousand (men) ate, “*besides women and children.*” The same addition appears in Matt 15:38. The reference complements Matthew's other recognitions of women's presence among Jesus' followers (for example, 9:20-22; 10:35; 24:41; 27:61; 28:1-10)...Some scholars suggest that Matthew envisions the women and children as seated separately from the men, but the thesis lacks textual and even strong cultural support.” (Women in Scripture)

WAGERS, RALPH E. (CSB, Lecturer, Associate Editor, President, and Normal Class Teacher), “**A Right Sense of Values,**” EDITORIAL, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol. 63 (9 September 1961), p. 1561.

--An incident is recorded in the twelfth chapter of Mark's Gospel that throws light upon the Master's sense of values.

- He observed that in casting money into the treasury, the rich cast in much.

--We often make observations from the standpoint of externals, comparing great with small, or much with little, and these comparisons have a determining effect upon our attitudes and interests.

--In the desert the disciples looked upon what appeared to be a small amount of food with which to feed a multitude of five thousand men, besides women and children.

- But Jesus, “*looking up to heaven, . . . blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude*” (Matt. 14:19).

---They were filled, and twelve baskets full remained.

Gubbins, Florence Irene, "**Feeding the Multitudes**," *Christian Science Sentinel*, Vol. 36 (10 March 1934), p. 545.

--Seeing the multitudes today in the wilderness of material beliefs, as students of Christian Science we may be tempted to be appalled at the largeness of the multitude and at the smallness of our understanding with which to feed it; and yet the command to us, the disciples of Truth, is, "*Give ye them to eat.*"

- The measure of our understanding may appear to us to be as small as seven loaves "*and a few little fishes*," so to speak, but if our understanding is the understanding of the unadulterated truth it contains the elements necessary to fuller unfoldment.

---Therefore we should know that upon our understanding rests the blessings stated in the first chapter of Genesis, "*Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.*"

- Then we should not be afraid to put to use the understanding we have attained, and it will reach the receptive thought, which will in turn distribute this bread to the waiting multitudes.

SECTION VI: John's vision of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21: 1 *I saw* [to :], 2-4 [to :], 10, 11, [to :], 22, 23)

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: Written 93-96 AD, probably by John at Patmos, to the first-century Christians in Asia [**Turkey**] who were in a crisis of identity.

"Revelation ends with a vivid and dramatic image of a new heaven, a new earth, and a new Jerusalem (21:1—22:7)." (Theological Bible Commentary)

"John...sees a new heaven and a new earth, which have replaced their earlier counterparts that have 'passed away' (21:1; cf. 20:11)." (HarperCollins Bible Commentary)

New Jerusalem (v.2) "comes from heaven as the dwelling place of redeemed humanity with God—the union of heaven and earth, or of the bride and her husband Christ (cf. 19:7-8)." (Oxford Bible Commentary)

"[v.3] the words echo God's OT promises to dwell with his own people Israel as their God (Ezek 37:27-8; Zech 8:8) and also that many nations will be his people with whom he will dwell (Zech 2:10-11...)." (Ibid)

"Although philosophical arguments for the character-building value of these built-in afflictions of the human condition [*all tears...death...sorrow...crying...pain*, v.4] can be made, John is not writing philosophy. He is the prophetic mediator of the word of that One who declares that the 'former things' (with this one phrase he sums up all the world's misery of all the ages) have 'passed away,' because he makes all things new." (Interpretation series: Revelation)

"This [vv.5-8] is the first time since 1:8 that God speaks directly (as distinct from 'a voice from the throne,' a phrase which preserves a reverent indirectness)." (Ibid)

"In the visions that constitute Revelation, John has been shown two cities—Babylon, the city of the beast (17:1), and new Jerusalem, the city of the Lamb (21:9). At the heart of John's theological vision is a call to decision: the churches to which John writes must regularly and repeatedly decide in which city they want to live." (Theological Bible Commentary)

"The New Jerusalem comes down from heaven from God; even more, the city is called (vss,9-10) the bride, the Lamb's wife. Why? Because she is its most prominent inhabitant." (King James Bible Commentary)

"For [John] the city has no temple [v.22] because the city as a whole is holy. God is directly present to all throughout its streets, not only in some designated holy place." (Interpretation series: Revelation)

"*No need of the sun, neither of the moon,*" v.23: "God is transcendent, unbearable, glorious Light. God's presence in the city at once banishes night and all its anxieties and makes all other forms of light irrelevant." (Ibid)

John

(Abbreviated)

"The author of the fourth Gospel was the younger of the two sons of Zebedee." (Baker Encyclopedia) John and his father and brother were fishermen, and lived in Capernaum, possibly Bethsaida [Golon Heights of Syria], on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Although it is not certain that Salome and Mary were sisters, if it were so it would make James and John cousins of Jesus. Luke describes John and James as partners with Peter and Andrew. John, James, and Peter formed the inner circle of the disciples of Jesus. This special position seems to have caused some envy among Jesus' other followers....

"In the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96) John was banished to 'the isle that is called Patmos' (a small, rocky, and almost uninhabited island on the Aegean Sea), 'for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ' (Rev 1:9). Irenaeus and Eusebius say that this took place near the end of Domitian's reign. John's return from exile took place during the brief but tolerant reign of Nerva." (Baker Encyclopedia) He later returned to Ephesus "as the scene of his later ministrations, and it is probable that the seven churches of Asia (in the vicinity of Ephesus) enjoyed his care (Rev.1:11)." (Peloubet's Bible Dictionary) He died at an age above 90 at Ephesus sometime after Trajan became emperor in 98 AD....

"a bride adorned for her husband"/"the wife of the Lamb"

"BRIDE Purity and innocence, conceiving man in the idea of God; a sense of Soul, which has spiritual bliss and enjoys but cannot suffer." (S&H, p. 582)

"BRIDEGROOM. Spiritual understanding; the pure consciousness that God, the divine Principle, creates man as His own spiritual idea, and that God is the only creative power."

"NEW JERUSALEM. Divine Science; the spiritual facts and harmony of the universe; the kingdom of heaven, or reign of harmony." (S&H, p. 592)

"LAMB OF GOD. The spiritual idea of Love; self-immolation; innocence and purity; sacrifice." (S&H, p. 590)

"In present day Christian circles much confusion exists as to who or what constitutes the Bride." (All the Women of the Bible)

"The bride of the Lamb appears in the last half of the Book of Revelation and is one of the central symbols in the utopian vision of God's heavenly realm...The bride is...synonymous with the new Jerusalem, the utopian city that comes down from heaven, described 'as a bride adorned for her husband' (Rev 21:2). The bride becomes a city. When an angel shows the seer John 'the bride, the wife of the Lamb,' the city of the new Jerusalem appears (Rev 21:9). The bride becomes a city" (Women in Scripture)

Park, Veronica Violet, “A new heaven and a new earth,” Christian Science Sentinel, Vol. 60 (20 December 1958), p. 2217.

--*“I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea”* (Rev. 21:1).

- How great today is the need for every student of Christian Science really to glimpse this vision of the new heaven and earth, which the Apostle John had through the Christ, Truth, while yet he sojourned with men.

---Indeed it came to him in the midst of tribulation, during his banishment to the Isle of Patmos.

--Mary Baker Eddy defines “Christ” in “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures” in these words (p. 583): “*The divine manifestation of God, which comes to the flesh to destroy incarnate error.*”

--Today, through Christian Science, John’s revelation with its promise and comfort is finding its fulfillment, and as each student gains more of the divine light, he contributes to this fulfillment for all mankind.

- The tender Christ comes to the veriest sinner, to regenerate, comfort, and heal.

Hurd, Pearl Strachan, “New Jerusalem,” POEM, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol. 72 (4 July 1970), p. 1162.

What is the news—wireless? Cable?
Airmail or word of mouth? The news?
From conference rooms, from council chambers?
Bewilderment, confusion.

But listen!

Listen! The Revelator told it:
No longer any curse. And no more sea.
No Red Sea to be crossed again,
or Jordan. And no ancient enemy
enslaving, harassing, pursuing.

Two books describe it: peaceful and foursquare,
its boundaries symbol of equality,
as long as broad, as long as high....

Home, heaven to all—to all
who enter the eternal city
and make their permanent address—
the new Jerusalem.

Mutch, David G., "On St. John's vision," POEM, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol. 83 (3 August 1981), p. 1300.

Yes!

The Lamb of Love shall rule the world
with peace
that rod of iron, by Christ annealed.

*But we must first destroy
the dragon's ego play.*

Know envy's sting but empty space;
divinity's
infinity gives man pure grace.

We've one maker, Father-Mother,
shaping no
sensuality, no false brother.

So, malice, hence—Lamb, take the fore!
Magnanimity
shows ugly dungeon traits the door.

Field, Luman A., "The Holy City," Christian Science Sentinel, Vol. 11 (13 February 1908), p. 465.

--On pages 572 to 577 of Science and Health, Mrs. Eddy has given a very clear explanation of the "holy city," showing us that its true significance is "spiritual consciousness," —a consciousness possible here and now, and coining to us from the divine builder and maker.

- With this interpretation the passages quoted are not only very beautiful, but entirely reasonable, and Abraham's quest is seen to be such a practical one as fully to justify the great sacrifices involved in the search.

---"For he looked for a city [spiritual consciousness] which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

- He looked for a pure, abiding, and peaceful state of being such as is created and preserved only by the divine Mind, and the assurance is that God "hath prepared for them [for such seekers] a city [spiritual consciousness]."

--In the light of this spiritual interpretation, the description of the holy city given by John in Revelation glows with the beauty of inspiration, which is both purifying and healing. "He...shewed me that great city [spiritual consciousness], the holy Jerusalem, descending' Out of heaven from God, having the glory of God....And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb's the light thereof."

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