

BIBLE CHARACTERS MENTIONED IN THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE LESSON-SERMON*

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For CSDirectory.com

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Dear Friends:

This week's edition of the Bible Characters requires a little more explanation than usual. First, there are only two real "characters" in this Lesson-Sermon on "Substance." Therefore, I have expanded the focus to include the Golden Text, the Responsive Reading, and used the reference to the "disciples" in Section IV so that I could give you some really good explanatory periodical pieces on substance.

The Golden Text focuses on the universal scope of the Lord's riches.

In the Responsive Reading there are references to Abraham, Sarah, and Moses, none of whom I have used because it's not about them, but it is about the many heroes of the faith from the Old Testament that are important in the New Testament.

In Section I we read of a little quoted member of the tribe of Judah: **Jabez**.

The payment of the temple tax by **Peter** for Jesus is the subject of Section III.

In Section IV Jesus cautions his disciples to take heed of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. All of this is intertwined within the context of the disciples misunderstanding real sustenance while arguing over "Who forgot the bread?"—a delightful article by Nate Talbot.

Let's pray for the understanding of true substance for all those in need, Norman (from Dallas)

NEXT WEEK: Elihu; David; the "woman, which has an issue of blood;" and Paul.

SUBJECT: SUBSTANCE

GOLDEN TEXT: Universal Scope of the Lord's Riches (Rom 10: 12 the same)

"The first words express the design of the apostle through these verses, that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, but they stand upon the same level in point of acceptance with God." (Matthew Henry's Commentary)

Radcliffe, Perry H., "**Substance**," Christian Science Sentinel (22 December 1956), p. 2208.

--Mary Baker Eddy, the Discover and Founder of Christian Science, gave to the world the true concept of substance—one quite different from that which is generally held.

- To those who are materially minded, existence seems to be corporeal and all life to reside in matter.

--To popular thought, substance is largely confined to what can be seen, felt, heard, or comprehended by the material sense.

- Things are said to be substantial in proportion to such qualities as density, weight, thickness, and tensile strength.

---Also, substance often is measured in dollar and cents, and a wealthy individual is called a man of substance.

- To depend on such so-called substance is—to use an illustration of the master's—to build one's house on the sand.

Trammell, Mrs. Mary Metzner (CSB, Associate Editor; Editor; Director; and Editor-in-Chief; Boston, MA), "[To be really rich](#)," EDITORIAL, Christian Science Sentinel (8 May 2002), p. 28.

--the Bible says, "Riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Prov 23:5).

--Of course, a person doesn't have to lose everything to acquire spiritual wealth.

- But one does need to understand that material possessions and status don't constitute real well-being.

---They don't constitute real security, either.

---These come from God alone.

--The more we realize this, the richer we become—spiritually.

- Conversely, the more we look to cash, credit, and material possessions for satisfaction, the more deprived and frustrated we tend to feel.

---Why?

---Because we're looking for something we'll never find: genuine value in matter.

RESPONSIVE READING: [Heroes of the Faith](#) (Heb 11: 1-26)

"This verse [v.1] is written in the style of Hebrew poetry (used often in Psalms), in which two parallel and nearly identical phrases are used to state the same thing....substance. This is from the same Greek word translated 'express image' in 1:3 and 'confidence' in 3:14. The faith described here involves the most solid possible conviction, the God-given present assurance of a future reality." (MacArthur Commentary)

Cook, George Shaw (CSB, Lecturer, 1st Reader, Associate Editor, Editor, and Normal Class Teacher), "[The substance of things hoped for](#)," EDITORIAL, Christian Science Journal (May 1942), p. 103.

--The eleventh chapter of Hebrews begins with the following verse: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

- Faith is an excellent and helpful quality, but the demonstration of Christian science requires something more than mere faith.

---Scientific demonstration requires spiritual understanding based on the knowledge of God as omnipotent, omnipresent, omniactive Mind, or divine Principle.

- Of such understanding it may be truly said that it is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

--Referring to the so-called miracle performed by Christ Jesus in feeding the multitude when the supply of available food seemed limited to five loaves and two fishes, Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian science, asks this arresting question: "How were the loaves and fishes multiplied on the shores of Galilee, — and that, too, without meal or monad from which loaf or fish could come?" (S&H p.90)

- she says on page 206 of Science and Health, "In the scientific relation of God to man, we find that whatever blesses one blesses all, as Jesus showed with the loaves and the fishes, — Spirit, not matter, being the source of supply."

Anderson, Loy Elizabeth, "[The evidence of things not seen,](#)" Christian Science Sentinel (13 October 1956), p. 1768.

--Paul spoke from experience when he wrote to the Hebrews (11:1), "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

- His experience was gained not only through well-tried faith but also through his understanding of basic law, for he further states (verse 3), "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

---This statement is based on the understanding that the universe is spiritual rather than material and that it is governed by the invariable law of God.

- This basic fact is becoming more generally accepted today, but mankind does not always understand that God's law is available to the individual in his daily experience.

--The Bible holds within its pages the full proof of the existence and action of God's law in human affairs.

--Faith...as understood in Christian Science includes spiritual perception, which reaches far beyond the limits of the physical senses, even to a glimpse of the underlying reality of the infinite universe of divine Mind.

SECTION I: [The Nonroyal Descendants of Judah](#) (I Chron 4: 10)

"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
[J_’biz](“he hurries”)

Judah

↓
↓

Jabez

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.” He was noted for his honorable character. “He illustrates the power of prayer.” (Holman Dictionary)

Pogson, Reuben, “[The Prayer of Jabez](#),” Christian Science Sentinel (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.

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.

WAGERS, RALPH E. (CSB, Lecturer, Associate Editor, Normal Class Teacher, and President), “[Where Does Evil Come From?](#),” EDITORIAL, Christian Science Sentinel (6 October 1962), p. 1737.

--Asking the above question is much like asking, Where does ignorance come from?

--When evil is seen to be the same nature as ignorance and darkness, it will no longer deceive us.

--Evil is deception.

--Evil and ignorance...have a common source--nothingness.

--Spiritual facts cannot be lost by becoming mixed up with fables in human consciousness.

--The role of Science and the role of Christianity are inseparable.

- Christianity demonstrates what Science declares.

---Science declares that God can in no way be responsible for evil, either by causing or permitting it.

- As Christianity demonstrates this declaration, every claim of evil is proved unreal.

SECTION III: Payment of the Temple Tax (Matt 17: 24–27)

“The half-shekel tax is the one paid yearly by every adult Jewish man to the Temple. The story is found only in Mt., where it is naturally connected with Peter as the chief apostle. Its point of departure is the fact that Jesus did recognize the Temple and did pay such tax.” (Peake’s Commentary)

Peter
[P_’t_r] (“rock”)

TIME LINE: – 65 AD

Jonah [Jonas/John] (father)

Simon Peter [Cephas/Petros] = Unknown (Gospels refer to mother-in-law)

Andrew

The original name of this disciple was Simon. According to the Gospels, Jesus gave him the name Peter, the Greek translation of an Aramaic word “Cepha(s)” meaning “stone, rock.” 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.

He was a native of Bethsaida (**modern Golan Heights of Syria**), and his family probably lived at Capernaum [**on Lake Galilee**]. They were fishermen; Peter was even referred to as a master fisherman. Living in the district of Galilee [**modern northern Israel**] surrounded by Gentiles, Peter may have spoken colloquial Greek, but his native language would be Aramaic and his Galilean accent was quite obvious in Jerusalem at the trial of Jesus. Both Peter and his brother Andrew were followers of John the Baptist before knowing Jesus. “Peter was married, because the Gospels mention that Jesus healed his mother-in-law,” who lived in his house. “The apostle Paul later mentioned that Peter took his wife on his missionary travels.” (Who Was Who in the Bible) Peter’s house at Capernaum became the headquarters of Jesus’ lakeside ministry, and Peter’s boat was always at his disposal.

“Peter’s ardor, earnestness, courage, vigor, and impetuosity of disposition marked him from the first as the leader of the disciples of Jesus” (Westminster

Dictionary). Peter is the first named in every list of the twelve Apostles, and was apparently the strongest individual in the group. “He was the natural spokesman of the apostolic band” (Ibid). “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....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.’” (Who’s Who in the New Testament)

All three Synoptics credit Peter with a speaking role at Jesus’ transfiguration (Mark 8:29; Matt 16:16; Luke 5:10). He was always a man of action, but from his calling by Jesus to his denial of Jesus he was a man of impulse and aggressive energy, of childlike simplicity and daring, alternating with a weak and cowardly instability. It was not surprising that he was the first ready to walk to Jesus on the water. He is particularly remembered for his three-fold denial of Jesus, his repentance, and his three-fold commission by Jesus to “feed my sheep.” He was the first to witness Jesus’ resurrection—to see the risen Lord—and to recognize him as the Messiah.

In John 21 we have the account of a full re-instatement into the place of an apostle. From this time he became what his name signified, a rock—and his boldness in the face of persecution formed a sharp contrast with his previous timidity.

After Jesus’ ascension, at which he “sent out” his apostles into the world, Peter at once assumed the leadership of the apostles. He suggested the choice of a replacement for Judas. The earliest information about the early church comes from the Book of Acts. Part of the rhetorical structure of the Acts of the Apostles is the portrayal of both Peter and Paul as imitators of Jesus. The first 11 chapters of Acts are built around the activity of the Apostle Peter. He was the first of the apostles to perform a miracle in the name of Jesus—healing the cripple at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. He conducted the defense of John and himself before the Sanhedrin, and pronounced the condemnation of Ananias and Sapphira.

It was Peter who healed Aeneas, the paralytic at Lydda [[modern Lod](#)], and he raised to life Dorcas, the woman of many good works in Joppa [[modern Jaffe, close to Tel Aviv](#)]. He proclaimed salvation to the churches and preached the gospel to the Gentiles. We know little of Peter’s work outside Palestine, but he continued the healing ministry of Jesus throughout the Middle East.

After remaining for some time at Caesarea, he returned to Jerusalem, where he defended his conduct with reference to the Gentiles. Next we hear of his being cast into prison by Herod Agrippa; but in the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison gates, and he went forth and found refuge in the house of Mary.

Although there is no evidence directly linked to the event, it is highly probable that Peter was martyred in Rome @ 65 A.D., when Nero made the Christians the

scapegoats for the burning of Rome, which he had himself initiated. According to early Christian tradition, Peter, as an old man, suffered martyrdom by crucifixion head downwards.

“Of far more importance is the statement that Mark wrote his Gospel under the teaching of Peter, or that he embodied in that Gospel the substance of our apostle’s oral instruction.” (Peloubet’s Bible Dictionary) Authentic history adds but little to our knowledge of Peter’s life beyond what we glean from the New Testament. “The only written documents which Peter has left are the First Epistle—about which no doubt has ever been entertained in the Church—and the Second, which has been the subject of earnest controversy.” (Ibid)

Weeks, Harold Taylor, “[Then are the children free,](#)” Christian Science Sentinel (1 November 1958), p. 1897.

--Christ Jesus emphasized [the] divine relationship [between children and God] and illustrated its healing power in an incident recorded in Matthew’s Gospel.

- In the seventeenth chapter we read of Peter’s encounter with the tribute collectors and of their question to him, “Doth not your master pay tribute?”

--When Peter came into the house, the Master said to him, “What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?”

- The account continues: “Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.”

--The Master’s scientific handling of Peter’s concern and the subsequent solution of the problem is the same metaphysical method taught by Christian Science today.

- The Master first directed Peter’s thought away from the material evidence with a brief analogy from which he then drew the healing spiritual corollary.

Butler, Diana Davis, “[Gen Xers: Peter Would Have Loved Them,](#)” Christian Science Sentinel (29 June 1998), p. 6.

--In some of the New Testament’s accounts of him, Peter expresses extreme attitudes.

- Yet his loyalty, faith, and spiritual understanding eventually overcame his impetuosity, daring, and unreliable temperament.

---The human characteristics that allowed Peter to become a disciple had to be purified and molded into spiritual qualities before Peter could go on to accomplish his life’s work of spreading the gospel.

- Peter’s struggles with the results of his sometimes rash behavior versus the spiritual growth that transformed him into a great individual, provides a guide for each of us.

--Peter is a wonderful example to all of us.

SECTION IV: Jesus Cautions His Disciples to Take Heed of the Leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod (Mark 8: 14–21)

TIME LINE: Year of Opposition and Development (Jesus' 3rd year of ministry), Summer 29 AD at Capernaum and Sea of Galilee

PARALLEL GOSPEL: Matt 16: 1–12

“What the caution was (v.15 [not included in this week’s lesson]): ‘Take heed, beware, lest ye partake of the leaven of the Pharisees, lest ye embrace the tradition of the elders, which they are so wedded to, lest ye be proud, and hypocritical, and ceremonious, like them.’ Matthew adds, and of the Sadducees; Mark adds, and of Herod; whence some gather, that Herod and his courtiers were generally Sadducees, that is, deists, men of no religion.” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary)

disciples

“The disciples, or Apostles, were “followers of Jesus Christ, especially the commissioned twelve who followed Jesus during His earthly ministry. The English word ‘apostle’ comes from the Greek term apostolos, which means a messenger, envoy, or ambassador.” (Holman Dictionary)

“The Gospels clearly show that the word ‘disciple’ can refer to others besides the twelve.” (Ibid)

“The meaning and content of the term ‘disciple’ varies in the four Gospels. Each writer uses this broad term, which tends simply to designate a follower of Jesus, in ways that support the writer’s understanding of the community of the followers of Jesus and impress on the reader the contours and complexities of the life of a contemporary disciple.” (Oxford Guide to People & Places)

Talbot, Nathan A. (CSB, Lecturer; CoP; Associate Editor; Executive Editor; Trustee, CSPS; Normal Class Teacher; Director; and Clerk), “[Who forgot the bread?](#),” Christian Science Sentinel (29 September 1980), p. 1663.

--Perhaps it was James.

- Or maybe Andrew.

---Some might have suspected Andrew’s impetuous brother, Peter.

• At any rate, the disciples were discussing the issue—maybe even arguing over who was at fault.

---The felt Jesus was rebuking their neglect.

--Can we help smiling at the disciples?

• Here was Jesus, the greatest teacher of all time, trying to bring home a vital lesson.

---And here were the disciples arguing over bread!

--might not this incident portray precisely what happens all too often when we pray?

- How many times have we sat down to turn our thought quietly Spiritward only to drift mentally into some irrelevant subject—perhaps carrying on a mental debate over an issue that altogether misses the point we should be considering.

Stone, Ella A., "[Have ye your heart yet hardened?](#)," Christian Science Sentinel (22 October 1932), p. 147.

--The writer has often pondered Jesus' question to his disciples, "Have ye your heart yet hardened?"

- In spite of the marvelous demonstration of divine power they had witnessed when Jesus fed the multitudes, they still seemed unable to understand the ever-presence of divine Love and its availability to meet human needs.

---Jesus, whose clear spiritual vision readily detected error, asked the searching question, "Have ye your heart yet hardened?" thus exposing the fact that some phase of thought unlike Love was obstructing their vision and preventing their understanding of reality.

- This question of Jesus to his students, together with the words of the Psalmist, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart," should make us watch and guard out thoughts against anything that could be termed hardness of heart.

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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, who discovered Christian Science.