

Bible Characters for Your Weekly Bible Study

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

For week of August 18 - 24, 2008

McCracken, Prof. William D. (CSB, 1st Reader, and Editor), "**Regarding 'Mind,'**" Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.4 (17 July 1902), p. 734 (In the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle)

--"To claim that 'Mind' with a capital letter is all-powerful and infinitely good, is to claim a good deal.

- If Mind be 'all-powerful' there can be no power, except in Mind; there cannot even be the power of resistance in matter; there cannot even be the power of position for the lever Mind to rest upon.

---'All' is a small word, but its sweep is stupendous."

--Mankind has been so strongly impressed with the actuality, reality, and potency of...zero [evil; error], that it has almost forgotten to estimate it at its real value as nothing, and has actually acquired the habit of looking upon nothing as something.

- [One] "would not consider himself illogical if he talked about zero, wrote down its symbol, or crossed it out, and yet zero is always nothing and never becomes anything.

GOLDEN TEXT: *God Ascribes Perfectness to Abram* (Gen 17: 1 *I am*)

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

"**The Almighty God** (Heb. *'El Shaddai*) appears to have been something of a new title and, therefore, a new revelation to Abram. His corresponding conduct must be to walk before *'El Shaddai* in uprightness." (King James Bible Commentary)

WAGERS, RALPH E. (CSB, Lecturer, Associate Editor, Normal Class Teacher, and President), "**Spiritual Completeness,**" EDITORIAL, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.65 (8 June 1963), p. 985.

--...as Mary Baker Eddy writes in "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" (p.514),

"Tenderness accompanies all the might imparted by Spirit."

--In the first verse of the seventeenth chapter of Genesis is recorded the Lord's declaration to Abraham, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect."

- Since, according to our Leader, that which is almighty must be tender as well as strong, the Almighty God must include the qualities usually associated with both motherhood and fatherhood.

--In general thought, however, the term "mother" is often applied to nature rather than to Deity.

- As a result, men and women have been inclined to think of themselves more in terms of natural processes than of spiritual laws, or else they imagine some sort of partnership between God and nature, sometimes even deifying nature.

Armstrong, Edyth S., “**Walk before me,**” Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.48 (7 September 1946), p. 1551.

--In the seventeenth chapter of Genesis it is recorded that God made a covenant, an agreement or testament, with Abram.

- This covenant is stated in the unforgettable words, “Walk before me, and be thou perfect.”

--The Bible unfolds from the pattern of this old covenant and its successor, the new covenant or New Testament.

--The chosen nation, the descendants of Abram, called themselves the children of Israel....They proposed to follow the covenant of Abram, whose name was changed to Abraham because his concept of God was enriched.

• In time, however, they became mesmerized by a sense of self-sufficiency and material prosperity, and turned from the law of God and the covenant of Abram.

--Each [of us] learned what we learn today as we faithfully walk before God, namely, that in communion and prayer we walk in His presence, and the proofs appear.

SECTION II: Solomon's Dream-revelation in Gibeon (I Kings 3: 5-7, 9-12 (to ;))

RELATED SCRIPTURE: I Chron 22:5; II Chron 1:7-13

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: Written by an unnamed prophet between 561-538 BC. The event occurred @971 BC.

"This [chapter] relates how Solomon, out of various gifts offered to him by the Almighty, chose wisdom, and adds an illustration of the use he made of the gift with which he was endowed." (Dummelow Commentary)

“God often gave revelation in dreams....However, this dream was unique—a two-way conversation between the Lord and Solomon.” (v.5) (MacArthur Commentary)

"Solomon's prayer [v.9] exhibits (a) a strong sense of responsibility and a conviction that high position involves corresponding duties; (b) a consciousness that truth and falsehood, right and wrong, are not always easy to distinguish, and to discern between them there are needed special gifts of the heart and understanding; (c) that such gifts are derived from God, who bestows them in answer to prayer." (Dummelow Commentary)

"Solomon's prayer shares some features with other biblical prayers. Self-deprecation ('I am only a little child,' etc.), description of one's plight ('Who can govern this your great people?'), and recollection of God's past mercies ('You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father') are all familiar elements in appeals for God's help." (Eerdmans Commentary)

Solomon

[Sol'ō-mōn] (the peaceful)

(Abbreviated)

Solomon was a child of David's mature age with Bathsheba, and enjoyed all the privileges of being “born to the purple.” His name, Solomon, means The Peaceful, one whose reign was foretold to be a reign of peace and quietness. He was brought up in luxury and wealth and knew nothing of the hardships which developed much of the character of his father. He received a good education and was placed under the care and training of Nathan, an eminent Hebrew prophet....

Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom. "Solomon came to the throne probably at the age of twenty or twenty-one and ruled for forty years (971-931 BC). In his first year as king, Solomon traveled to Gibeon where the Tabernacle was located." (King's of the Old Testament)

God revealed Himself to Solomon in a dream and asked Solomon what he most desired. Instead of asking for material riches, comfort, or pleasure for himself, Solomon prayed above all things that God would equip him for his task of leadership. "The wisdom granted to Solomon in I Kings 3 is very specific: it is the understanding of how to rule and judge the nation, and it is probably the wisdom for which Solomon was at first remembered." (The Complete Bible Handbook)....

Hoag, Mrs. Ella W. (CSD, Mrs. Eddy's Student, Household; Lecturer, Associate Editor, and President), "[An understanding heart](#)," Christian Science Journal, Vol.43 (October 1925), p. 372.

--When God asked Solomon, "Ask what I shall give thee," Solomon replied, "Give...thy servant an understanding heart,...that I may discern between good and bad."

- And the Bible further records that "the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing."

---All true Christian Scientists are also praying for an understanding heart; they too are longing to be able to "discern between good and bad" and thereby please God.

--In spite of such prayers many of them are still wondering why their understanding does not increase more rapidly,--why they are not able more quickly and accurately to separate between the true and the false.

- May it be that one reason for this inability is that they are believing this understanding belongs to the head rather than the heart?

--Christian Scientists, therefore, in praying for the intelligence and love which are able to separate between the true and the false, between the spiritual and material, need always to guard against that theoretical intellectualism which is one of the greatest barriers to the clear differentiation between good and evil.

Naugle, J. Parker, "[Solomon's Conclusion](#)," Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.9 (10 August 1907), p. 945.

--How many of us have wandered in the wilderness of materialism, seeking happiness in self-gratification and self-love, until the truth dawned upon our mental vision, through Christian Science.

- Daily I thank our dear Leader for the truth given to us through Science and Health.

---It came to me after many years of ritualism and creed, and I had much to unlearn before I was ready for the revelation.

- Like Solomon, I had to learn that human philosophy and experience are vanity and nothingness.

---Then, and not till then, was I ready to accept Mrs. Eddy's inspired and inspiring words, "All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all" (Science and Health, p. 468).

- Christian Science takes up the life-problem where Solomon left it,-proclaiming material belief as vanity, nothingness,-with the declaration that God is All.

SECTION III: Feeding the Four Thousand (Mark 8: 1-9)

PARALLEL GOSPEL: Matt 15: 32-38

TIME LINE: The Year of Opposition and Development (Jesus' 3rd year of ministry) at Decapolis on the Eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee; summer, 29 AD.

"the multitude"

“Matthew shares with Mark the double tradition of a feeding of the multitudes, while Luke has only the one in Matt 14:13-21, and John 6 shows signs of both combined.” (Peake’s Commentary)

Some scholars estimate that the withdrawal of Jesus with his disciples from Jewish territory was for as long as six months. Part of this time was spent in the northwest district of Tyre and Sidon; part of it was spent later in the northeast area of Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:13). A third period related to this passage was spent in Decapolis, a federation of ten Greek cities east of the Lake of Galilee.

With respect to [Matt] v.33 "Whence should we have so much bread," it is "no wonder our Lord calls them men of little faith (8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20), when they ask such a question after He recently fed the 5,000 ([Matt]14:13-21)." (MacArthur Commentary)

"They...were filled (Gr *chortazō*) [Mark v.8]. There was enough food for each to eat until his appetite was thoroughly satisfied. In fact, leftovers filled **seven baskets** (Gr *spyris*) which at times were large enough to hold men (Acts 9:25)." (King James Bible Commentary)

Taylor, Verne E., "The Multitude," POEM, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.30 (18 August 1928), p. 1007.

We were a multitude indeed who followed him that day!
He, with his chosen twelve, had sought a desert place apart
For some sweet intimacies of their own....

The years lie thick upon that day by Galilee,
But now as then the living Christ restores the sick;
And now as then there lies upon his followers
The gentle exhortation, "Give ye them to eat."
Then may there ever spring to thought, howe'er it be,
In desert place apart, amid a seeming lack of bread,
The glad assurance of our Lord that "they need not depart."
Thus shall Love's eternal promptuary still be found
Exhaustless; thus in living faith shall still be proved
That, if Christ bless the proffered loaves,
They shall suffice.

Hogrefe, Eva-Maria (CS and Staff Editor, Boston, MA), "**When kindness is prayer,**" Christian Science Journal (July 2002), p. 47.

--Although little acts of kindness can appear insignificant, they are nevertheless potent, because they have their source in God.

- They offer opportunities to understand the spiritual nature of God and man.

---“For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.” (Isa 54: 10)

--Jesus proved how kindness could be put into action.

- His spiritual nature found expression in his humanity, exemplified by his preaching, teaching, and healing.

---For example, as a guest at the house of his disciple Peter, Jesus gently attended to Peter's feverish mother-in-law and healed her. (Matt 8: 14-15)

- And how apparent his kindness was in his concern for a multitude of hungry people!

---He fed them all. (Mark 8:1-9)

--kindness is the essence of all the Commandments.

SECTION IV: Jesus Announces His Message; and a Demoniac Healed in the Synagogue at Capernaum (Mark 1: 14 *Jesus*, 15 (to:), 21-27)

PARALLEL GOSPEL: Luke 4: 31-37

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

"a man with an unclean spirit"

"From Judea...Mark along with Matthew and Luke, passes directly from the temptation to the beginning of the Galilean ministry [Mark 1:14], skipping Jesus' intervening ministry in Judea...." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

Demons, in the Old Testament, were usually believed to be gods. In the New Testament, they were called "an evil or unclean spirit" believed to be the cause of the illness, insanity, or disaster. "Demon-possession was prevalent in [Jesus'] time, and on numerous occasions [he cast them out]." (King James Commentary)

This story is told both in Mark and Luke. In Mark it is called "a demoniac healed in the synagogue at Capernaum" (**modern Tabgha, Israel**, and in Luke it is called "demoniac healed in the synagogue." Mark omits the contrast between Jesus' teaching and that of the scribes. "Luke here seems to be following Mark who begins his story of Jesus' ministry with a quick survey of what has been called 'a typical day.' Mark has described the temptation of Jesus in terms of a battle with Satan and this 'typical day' presents him as throwing back the power of the demonic world (Mark 1:21—2:12)" (Oxford Bible Commentary)

Capernaum, a prosperous fishing village, lay on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, and was the center of much of Jesus' activity. The foundation of an ancient synagogue has been excavated, perhaps on the site of the one visited by Jesus. "The narrator informs us that Jesus was teaching on the Sabbath. With the other Synoptic Gospels, Luke mentions Jesus' authority, but our author twice emphasizes that his *word* was with power 4:32,36)...." (Eerdmans Bible Commentary)

"A striking point in this miracle is the testimony of the demon to Christ's Messiahship, which, however, he refused to accept." (Dummelow Commentary) The demon seeks to gain power over Jesus or at least to neutralize Jesus' advantage by the ancient practice of pronouncing an opponent's name. If the possession was real, the demon's confession of Christ as "*the Holy One of God*" was probably extorted by fear. If the possession was not real, but imagined by the insane man, the confession was probably due to the man's instinctive sense that a person with supernatural powers was present, ready to heal him. The battle lines are drawn, the man convulses, and the demon is exorcised. All the witnesses are amazed at the power of Jesus' word, and the news spreads rapidly.

Chapin, Mary Jane, "**The beginning of the ministry**," EXPERIENCING THE GOSPEL OF MARK, Part two (Mark 1:14-45), Christian Science Journal, Vol.115 (August 1997), p. 18.

--[This] scene has Jesus teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath.

- There, the people were **astonished** with the authority in his message.
---It was different from anything they had ever heard.
- Suddenly, his inspiring words were interrupted by **a man with an unclean spirit...Saying, Let us alone;...Holy One of God.**

---Jesus immediately **rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.**

• Amid much shaking and screaming, he did come out—not because obedience is typically associated with unclean spirits, but because unclean spirits are rendered completely powerless in the abiding presence of Spirit, God, which had descended upon him.

--Now the people were *really* **amazed**, a word indicating awe, fear and wonder; they asked themselves, **What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.**

Watson, Jean McGeorge, “Casting Out Demons,” *Christian Science Journal*, Vol.76 (February 1958), p. 89.

--“... For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” (I John 3: 8)

• All who spiritually understand the Son of God, or Christ, can prove Truth’s liberating power in overcoming the various claims of evil which confront mankind.

---As we learn in Christian Science the facts of harmonious being and understand that the delusions of material sense have no real entity or existence, we prove invalid the false suggestions of the so-called carnal mind.

• The glorious realization of God’s allness causes the belief of life in matter, and the attendant fear of disease and death, to disappear before the ever-presence of the Christ.

--In the cross and crown emblem used on the published writings of Mary Baker Eddy and on most other Christian Science publications is included the command, "Cast out demons," and the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mrs. Eddy, teaches one how to cast out demons or false beliefs.

SECTION V: Jesus' Dialog with the Samaritan Woman; and His Witness to His Disciples (John 4: 5-7, 9-11,13-19, 25 *I know*, 26,28,29)

TIME LINE: The Year of Inauguration and Beginnings (Jesus' 1st year of ministry) at the well of Shechem in the town of Sychar in Samaria, December, 27 AD.

"a woman of Samaria"

(Abbreviated)

"John 4 describes the encounter between Jesus and a Samaritan woman." (Women in Scriptures) "The story of the Samaritan woman reinforces John's main theme that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God." (MacArthur Bible Commentary) The ministry in Samaria [**northern West Bank**] is recorded because it is the author’s design to exhibit Christ as the Saviour, not only of Israel, but of the world.

“The scene is set around a well traditionally associated with Jacob (4:5,6), a significant figure in Samaritan theology.” (Eerdmans Commentary) “Women generally came in groups to collect water, either earlier or later in the day to avoid the sun’s heat.” (MacArthur Commentary) By Hebrew time reckoning, the sixth hour would be noon; at midday Jesus would be weary from walking. This is one of the relatively few places in John’s Gospel where Jesus is allowed to show human frailty.

THE CONVERSATION (vv. 7-15)

"The woman comes to draw water (4:7) at a strange time, the height of the day's sun when no one else is around." (Eerdmans Commentary)

"Jesus' request of the woman of Samaria is not surprising by modern standards, given the setting, and the woman's surprise is understandable. There is, of course, no way the woman could have known the particular identity of Jesus as the bringer of salvation. The 'living water' is also running water; John typically plays upon a double meaning in Greek that cannot be duplicated in English. Jesus means 'salvific' or 'living water'; the woman thinks he is speaking of ordinary 'running water' in the well. That Jesus may be a special personage, however, is suggested by her question, which in Greek expects a negative answer: Jesus could not be greater than Jacob. Of course, Jesus is greater. Jesus now gives a more straightforward answer, revealing that the water he gives is of a radically different sort. The woman begins to understand but is apparently still thinking of the quenching of this-worldly thirst (v.15)." (Oxford Commentary)

JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF (vv.16-26)

Jesus suddenly turns the conversation in an unexpected direction (vv.16-18). His command, the woman's answer, and Jesus' rejoinder culminate in a startling revelation about herself, which she can only acknowledge as true (v.19). Understandably, she takes Jesus to be a prophet." (Ibid)

THE WOMAN WITNESSES TO THE SAMARITANS (vv. 27-30)

The woman, leaving her water jar, bears witness to her people, making clear her grounds for thinking Jesus may be the Christ. Because of her testimony, the people of the city now come to see Jesus.

Stanwell, Gerald, "[Sir, give me this water...](#)," POEM, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.75 (4 August 1973), p. 1344.

Preoccupied disciples cityward;
the scene—beyond the walls at dusty well
catching the golden light of noonday sun—
the Master's thoughtful innocence alone,
at rest, in quiet obedience to his God,
uplifting thought above all hungering flesh.

Walking slowly from the fruitless day
came a woman of Samaria
setting down her jar, sighing perhaps,
trapped in mocking satiety and toil,
hardly seeing who or what or where except
to draw her water and depart.....

"Give me to drink."

As sudden shaft of sunlight came the voice—
A spring of fresh beholding, touched with hope....

"**Satisfied—of Christ,**" Christian Science Monitor (16 August 1990), p. 18.

--There is an incident recorded in the Gospel of John in which we can clearly see Christ Jesus' ability, as the Messiah, to satisfy humanity's thirst for spiritual things.

- After a long journey from Judea he stopped in Samaria at Jacob's well and asked a local woman for a drink.

---His request startled her, as Jews and Samaritans at that time had little contact.

- In the course of the conversation, Jesus said to the woman, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

---The Master went on to explain, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

--The Samaritan woman *did* discover who it was that spoke with her.

- She identified him as a prophet and was able to perceive that he was indeed the promised Christ.

---The story implies that the woman's life was changed, even transformed by this remarkable encounter.

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.