

Bible Characters for Your Weekly Bible Study

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For week of October 26 – November 1, 2009

Carey, Beth (CS, Elsau, IL), “**Everlasting Kindness**,” IN THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE BIBLE LESSON: Everlasting Punishment, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.110 (27 April 2008), p. 21.

--Questions about divine punishment have been debated through the centuries.

- Mary Baker Eddy agreed with Isaiah’s view when she wrote that “*being is holiness, harmony, immortality.*”

---But she also wrote that wrongdoing must be faced, not ignored, and that “*the divine must overcome the human at every point.*”

- She learned from studying the Bible that firmly entrenched theological ideas such as that of a punishing God can become part of one’s thinking unless addressed head on.

--The Science of the Christ makes it clear that God’s blessing never involves wrongdoing and is always available.

- ...good is continuously with us, and *Science and Health* clarifies this point: “*man is spiritual and perfect; and because he is spiritual and perfect, he must be so understood in Christian Science*” (p.475).

GOLDEN TEXT: David’s Song of Thanksgiving for a Good and Merciful God (I Chron 16: 34)

RELATED SCRIPTURE: II Sam 6: 12-19; I Chron 16: 1-7; Ps 106: 1, 47, 48

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: "Jewish tradition strongly favors Ezra the priest...as 'the chronicler'. These records were most likely recorded c. 450-430 B.C." (MacArthur Bible Commentary) David made this exhortation @980 BC.

“I Chronicles 16:34-36...was sung on the occasion of the ark’s first being brought to Jerusalem by David.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

Sammons, John S., “**Give Thanks!**,” Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.35 (22 July 1933), p. 923.

--The success of the Christian Science movement relates directly to the ability of the individual Christian Scientist to prove in his daily life the power and presence of divine Love, as revealed by our revered Leader, Mrs. Eddy.

- Could there be anything more natural than the desire to tell of this proving, to share with others the light which has so blessed and enriched one’s life?

---There is but one answer.

---It is divinely natural and decidedly right to desire to tell others of one’s healing and definitely to resolve this desire into appropriate action.

- Each healing experience, even the simplest, has its place in the enfoldment of spiritual truth in one’s consciousness.

Haynes, Donna Harrison (CS, Indian Wells, CA), “**The power of divine mercy**,” Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.107 (29 August 2005), p. 10.

--Every heart yearns for the touch of God’s love, to feel His mercy.

- It is our God-given right to know this mercy, which brings us blessings, forgiveness, and restoration.

---And we don’t have to wait for a later time or some future event to be worthy of God’s mercy.

- We have an immediate and forever connection with the compassion of our divine Parent, whose love lifts us out of the belief that we come from a mistake-making past.

--God, in His merciful love, sees only our goodness.

- As a human quality, mercy represents people loving each other as God loves them, through kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.

“scribes and Pharisees”
(See Sections IV, V, and VI)

Scribes: “Scribes were distinguished professional people throughout the ancient world. Although they were called scribes because they could read and write, they were not only copyists. In Israel, some were officials who had authority to draw up legal documents. Some held special positions in the royal palace and functioned as ministers of finance or secretaries of state.” (Oxford Guide to People & Places) They were “capable of reading and writing, usually with competence in some area such as law, economics, or the like.” (HarperCollins Dictionary) “More specifically the scribes, or *Sopherim*, were those who copied, taught, and explained the law.” (Peloubet's Dictionary)

Pharisees: They “were the most numerous and influential of all the religious sects of Jesus' day. They were strict legalists. They stood for the rigid observance of the letter and forms of the Law, and also for the Traditions. There were some good men among them. But in the main they were known for their covetousness, self-righteousness, and hypocrisy.” (Halley's Bible Handbook) They constituted the most important of the groups opposed to Jesus. “The Pharisees were a group that interpreted Torah so that its meaning could be applied to everyday life. Their name means 'interpreters,' but it can also mean 'separatists,' and they were called that by their opponents.” (Complete Bible Handbook) “The synagogue was the peculiar institution of the Pharisees as the Temple was for the Sadducees.” (Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary) “Luke’s portrayal of the Pharisees recalls portraits of the Sophists in Hellenistic texts: the respected teachers of the common people, who come out to scrutinize Jesus’ activities (Luke 5:17).” (Eerdmans Dictionary) “Jesus continually denounced their external observance of the Law, their multitude of petty traditions, and particularly their self-righteousness.” (Who’s Who in the New Testament)

Roegge, Mrs. Beulah M. (CSB; Lecturer; Associate Editor; Herald Editor; Trustee, CSPS; Publisher's Agent; Clerk; and Contributing Editor), “**Lowly scribes, holy words**,” POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.115 (August 1997), p. 17.

O Holy Bible scribes, when we
are tempted by apostasy
your copied page persuades—God is.

Submissive to His authorship,
you pen dominion over sin
and guide us to discipleship.

Through your venues and avenues
we reach Christ's own authority
to heal the sick, to preach, to teach.

Cyberspace Scripture purveyors,
with World Wide Web and Internet,
still borrow from your ancient texts.

O worthy scribes in every age,
you may not vie with prophet, sage,
but through your work their words survive
and give glorious utterance to our lives.

“Jesus and the Pharisees,” Christian Science Journal, Vol.110 (January 1992), p. 16.

--In Jesus' time the Pharisees were the dominant religious influence in Judaism. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus tells us that they had great “power over the multitude” and were generally supposed to “excel other” as authoritative interpreters of the Jewish law. (*The Works of Josephus*)

--The Pharisees stressed strict religious observance.

- They encouraged daily worship in local synagogues.
- They insisted that every Jew should participate daily and fully in the observance of religious laws governing diet, purification, and observance of the Sabbath.

--Because they felt that worship extended beyond the temple in Jerusalem, and was centered in the day-to-day life of the people, the Pharisees were the major Jewish religious group to survive after the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 during the disastrous Jewish revolt against Roman authority.

• Their work in the next two centuries helped to establish the foundations of what has since been called rabbinic Judaism and thus profoundly shaped the Jewish religious tradition extending down into our time. From the Gospels, however, we get a different and harsher view of the Pharisees. Indeed, they are often denounced by Jesus as representatives of spiritual hypocrisy, insisting on strict religious observance but substituting “the tradition of men” for “the commandment of God.”

--Jesus did not oppose observance of the Mosaic law.

• But for him, real religion was entirely a matter of true, heartfelt observance of the *spiritual* demands that underlay the law: the commands to “*love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength*” and to “*love thy neighbor as thyself.*”

SECTION IV: Jesus and the Woman Taken in Adultery (John 8: 1-11)

TIME LINE: The Year of Opposition and Development (Jesus' 3rd year of ministry), mid-October 29 AD in the treasury of the Temple located in the court of women, the most public part of the Temple, on Mt. Moriah, in the city of Jerusalem. Written c. 80-90 AD.

“The material in chapter 8 consists of a number of dialogues which continue themes already discussed in chapters 5 and 7. It also paves the way for the dramatic story of healing which follows in chapter 9. This is clear from [v. 12], the second of the ‘I am’ sayings. The theme of Jesus as ‘light’ was begun in the opening verses of the Prologue (1:4,5,9).” (Eerdmans Commentary)

"This famous story was not originally a part of the Gospel of John." (HarperCollins Bible Commentary) “It is not found at all in the earliest and best MSS of the Gospel.” (People's NT Commentary) “The dialogue partners turn out to be the Pharisees (v.13) rather than the ‘Jews,’ but the subject of the dispute is a continuation of the earlier question about testimony.” (Ibid) “If Jesus

rejected the Law of Moses (Lev.20:10; Deut.22:22) [v.6], [his] credibility would be gone. If [he] held to Mosaic law, [his] reputation for compassion and forgiveness would have been questioned.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

“They [the accusers] left [vv.9-11], probably not out of conviction, but rather they had been defeated in their attempt to trap the Son of God.” (King James Bible Commentary) "For the first time in the story Jesus and the woman now address one another [vv.10,11]." (Eerdmans Commentary)

“a woman taken in adultery”

“The woman presented to [Jesus] by her accusers was without doubt guilty of the sinful conduct with which she was charged, and [he] in no way condoned her serious offense. Doubtless [he] pitied the woman’s weakness and made full allowance for the force of temptation compelling her to sin.” (All the Women of the Bible)

“The woman was only betrothed, not married, otherwise her punishment would not have been stoning, but strangulation, for so the rabbis interpreted Lv 20:10 Dt 22:22. But inasmuch as among the Jews betrothal was almost equivalent to marriage (see on Mt 1:18), the sin of a betrothed woman was regarded as a species of adultery.” (Dummelow)

“For most of the story she is but a prop, an object used in the story. This only changes when Jesus speaks to her directly. These teachers challenge Jesus, 'What do you say about her,' that is, this obvious sinner?" (Women in the NT) “Ascertaining that no one has condemned her, Jesus sends her on her way, asking only that she not sin again (8:11).” (Women in Scripture)

Robinson, Bert V., "Cast Not a Stone," Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.36 (24 February 1934), p. 504.

--We learn in Christian Science that sins are forgiven only as they are destroyed.

- Mortals find sin in their own thought; and from there it must be cast out, destroyed, and thus be forgiven.

---Christian Science teaches that to forgive is not mistakenly to endure, but to do away with whatever is unlike God, good; to put it out of our consciousness; to identify the offender—ourselves or another—with the true likeness instead of with the false concept we formerly held.

--The story of the woman brought to Jesus for his interpretation of the Mosaic law is familiar to all Bible students; and those who have grasped the deeper meaning of his memorable answer, “*He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,*” many times have been enabled to neutralize and silence unjust condemnation in their own thinking.

Crawford, Arthur Hampton, “Sin no more,” Christian Science Journal, Vol.81 (March 1963), p. 145.

--John’s Gospel (Chapters 5 and 8) records the sudden freeing of two individuals from strikingly different bondage.

- These liberated individuals—the man by the Bethesda pool, who had been crippled for thirty-eight years, and the woman taken in adultery—must have showed to Christ Jesus a willingness to leave their ways, for with characteristic helpfulness the Master blessed each of them with the solemn words, “*Sin no more.*”

--Christ Jesus neither ignored sin nor considered it beyond the scope of men to overcome.

- He enjoined all men to vanquish it wherever it occurs and particularly in themselves.

---He considered sin, with all its apparent effects, not only an obstacle to individual progress but also an unreality, for he would not attempt to banish something which his omniscient Father had designed, nor would he expect others to eliminate a reality.

SECTION V: The Healing of “a man...with palsy” (Luke 5: 18-25)

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Matt 9: 2-8; Mark 2: 2-12

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

“a man which was taken with a palsy”

This story is told in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In Matthew and Mark it is called “The Sick of the Palsy;” in Luke it is called “The Paralytic.” “The story presupposes that the infirmity has a spiritual cause (cf. Ex 20:5; I Cor 11:29-30; James 5:14-15; in [Matt] 9:32-34 a demon makes a man deaf and dumb).” (Oxford Bible Commentary)

"Jesus had been traveling throughout Galilee, preaching and teaching, and people keep coming to him to be healed and cured." (On Your Mark) His "entry into Capernaum was unknown by the public," but when "someone discovered his presence, the news spread like wildfire." (King James Commentary) "As Jesus arrives at Capernaum, some people carry to him a man who was unable to walk, presumably near the shore in the hope that Jesus will heal him ([Matt] 9:2-8)." (Eerdmans Commentary) "Brought to Jesus on a bed, the man's paralysis was severe. Jesus' words of forgiveness [Matt 9:2] may indicate that the paralysis was a direct consequence of the man's own sin." (MacArthur Commentary)

“The peculiarity of this miracle is that it was worked to prove a doctrine, and that in the face of opposition. There were present certain scribes and Pharisees, some of whom had doubtless come from Jerusalem expressly to oppose Jesus. Jesus at once threw them a challenge by saying to the man, ‘Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.’ The scribes understood this to mean that [he] claimed to forgive sins as only God can do. Instead of repudiating this suggestion, as a mere man would have done, Jesus accepted it, and proceeded to prove [his] claim by a miracle.” (Dummelow Commentary)

“Jesus’ question [*Whether is easier*, Luke 5:23] contains an (intentional?) ambiguity. On the one hand, it is easier to say, [*Thy sins are forgiven*], than to say, [*Rise up and walk*], for the validity of the latter statement can be immediately determined but not that of the former.” (People’s NT Commentary)

"In response to the scribes' and Pharisees' questioning, Jesus claims that 'the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins' ([Luke]5:24)." (Eerdmans Commentary) "It is certainly easier to claim the power to pronounce absolution from sin [*whether is easier*] than to demonstrate the power to heal." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"[Luke] alone mentions the glorifying of God by the paralytic [v.25], and the fear of the bystanders." (Peake's Commentary) "The audience was stunned again when Jesus healed the man of his paralysis [Matt 9:8]; and *they marveled*, (lit., they were afraid)." (King James Bible Commentary)

Meades, Alfred C., "Immediately," POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.77 (February 1959), p. 74.

Immediately! The sacred pages say
The Master healed the sick
And raised the dead.

To leper, sinner, cripple, maimed,
The healing Word was said,
And all were freed and thus acclaimed
Immediately.

Immediately! Our textbook says
Man is the child of God,
Not in some far-off realm
That at some future time may be attained,
But here and now;
And with this truth he is sustained
Immediately.

Tyler, Mrs. Cynthia (Dorchester, MA), “**Child’s Paralysis—Healed**,” TESTIMONIES OF HEALING, Christian Science Journal, Vol.125 (April 2007), p. 32.

--The ability of Christian Science treatment to heal quickly and completely was proven to me early on in my study and practice of Christian Science a number of years ago.

• I had been studying Christian Science for only about five months when, the day before Christmas Eve, our two-an-a-half-year old son became sick with a fever and couldn’t move from the waist down. I immediately called a Christian Science practitioner for treatment for our son.

--My deepest concern and my husband’s was to relieve our son of this illness and as quickly as possible. I had already begun to learn...that fear, instigated by the material senses, is the source of sickness and suffering and not God, who never causes His children to suffer.

--[A day later] All of a sudden Christopher came sliding down the stairs on his tummy and came leaping and hopping into the kitchen. “I healed, Mommy!” he gleefully exclaimed.

SECTION VI: The Celebration by Levi (Matthew) (Mark 2: 15-17)

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Matt 9: 9-13; Luke 5: 27-32, 36-38

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

“This scene had transparent meaning for disciples in a Greco-Roman house church assembled in a dining room...and spilling out into the peristyle garden listening to the Gospel read aloud.” (Eerdmans Commentary)

“This [*sat at meat*, Mark 2:15] can also be translated ‘reclining at table,’ a common posture for eating when guests were present. According to Luke 5:29, this was a feast that Matthew gave in Jesus’ honor.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"In [Luke 5:27] stress is laid on the fact that Levi [Matthew] was a tax collector, and as such was an outcast." (Peake's Commentary)

In Matt. [9:12], the phrase “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick,” shows “the Pharisees thought they were well—religiously pure and whole. The outcasts knew they were not. Salvation can’t come to the self-righteous.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

“The word [*righteous*, Matt 9:13] is used here in an ironic sense, meaning self-righteous. Ultimately, as the Scripture tells us, “there is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom 3:10).” (King James Bible Commentary)

“publicans [tax collectors] and sinners”

“In...eating with tax collectors and sinners ([Matt 9]:10), Jesus transgressed social propriety in favor of the ostracized.” (Eerdmans Commentary) Sinners was “a term the Jews used to describe people who had no respect for the Mosaic Law or rabbinic traditions, and were, therefore, the most vile and worthless of people.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

“When St. Luke says, ‘Then drew near to the Lord all the publicans and sinners for to hear him,’ we must understand him as giving the prevailing feature in the whole of Christ’s ministry, or at least in one epoch of it. The publicans were hateful to their countrymen, being accounted as traitors who for the sake of filthy lucre had sided with the Romans, the oppressors of the theocracy, and now collected tribute for a heathen treasury. No alms might be received from their money-chest; their evidence was not taken in courts of justice, and they were put on the same level with heathens (this fact gives an emphasis to Luke xix. 9). By the word ‘sinners’ is meant all those who, till awakened by the Lord to repentance, had been notorious transgressors. Being come to seek and to save that which was lost, [he] received them graciously, and lived in familiar intercourse with them.” (Trench Parables)

Cook, George Shaw (CSB, Lecturer, 1st Reader, Associate Editor, Editor, and Normal Class Teacher), **“They that are whole,”** EDITORIAL, Christian Science Sentinel (13 May 1939), p. 730.

--It is recorded of Jesus, in the Gospel of Mark, that “*when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*” From this it is evident that the most spiritually minded of men did not ignore the fact that mankind is in need of healing and salvation.

--In the Preface to *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*,” Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, says (p.xi), “*The physical healing of Christian Science results now, as in Jesus’ time, from the operation of divine Principle, before which sin and disease lose their reality in human consciousness and disappear as naturally and as necessarily as darkness gives place to light and sin to reformation.*”

• This very plainly indicates that Christian Science, which is a restatement of primitive Christianity, has for its twofold purpose the healing of sin and of sickness.

--Christ Jesus, the Way-shower for mankind, and Mary Baker Eddy, who has given to the world the scientific explanation of the Christ, which Jesus demonstrated, both strongly emphasize healing and regeneration as signs following an understanding of Truth.

Childs, William A., “**In Reply to Sermons Against Christian Science,**” Christian Science Journal, Vol.19 (December 1901), p. 589.

--When some Pharisees asked why Jesus and his disciples ate with publicans and sinners, Jesus replied: “*They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.*” This he followed with, “*But go ye and learn what that meaneth,*” and then, apparently to avoid all chance of their failure, he made his meaning perfectly clear by adding: “*I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*”

--Nevertheless, and notwithstanding Jesus was himself a physician, practising and instructing others to practise a manner of healing immeasurably more potent than that of the doctors of medicine, this minister says Jesus’ meaning was to “substitute a comparison between physicians [doctors of medicine]

and himself, between their office work and his," and, "incidentally, to teach the doctrine that when one is sick he needs a physician [a doctor of medicine], as one in sin needs a Saviour."

--That the sick need a physician was not a question then, more than now. But what kind of a physician they need was the question then and is the question now, and Jesus answered it emphatically and over and over again, for then, and for now, and for all time.

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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.

Bible studies are one of the foundational ways that Christians gather to learn about their faith. As a result, these small groups are a very common aspect of life for many American Christians. But one particular Bible study group has been gaining notoriety in recent months, primarily because of the powerful people who are attending, and the controversial lessons being taught.Â Since Trump arrived in the White House, Drollinger has also been meeting weekly with members of the White House Cabinet. The sessions have been taking place since at least April.