--THE real or spiritual man, to whose existence the greatest seers of the ages have borne consistent testimony, cannot be discerned from the standpoint of finite sense.

- Finite sense insists that the universe is material and that man is mortal.

---The understanding and application of Christian Science, however, show that the material so-called creation, including mortal man, is but the objective representation of material belief in widely differentiated forms, and that it has no existence apart from the erratic point of view which gives it seeming reality.

--In arriving at an estimate of man we are thus obliged to choose between the spiritual point of view which makes reality self-evident, and the material point of view which spiritual discernment, logic, and demonstration refute.

- There is no alternative.

SECTION II: Solomon’s Request for Wisdom (I Kings 3: 5-7, 9, 10)

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 in Gibeon [El-jib, 5 mi NW of Jerusalem].

"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." (Dummelew 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." (Dummelew 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)

“The purpose of this narrative is to praise Solomon as a king who was as godly as Hezekiah and Josiah later would be.” (HarperCollins Bible Commentary)
**Solomon**

[Sol’ō-môn] (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." (Kings 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)

“One of Solomon’s first major feats was the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem as a place for worship of the God of Israel. The task was enormous, involving much planning and many workers.” (Who Was Who in the Bible) "No remains of these [Temple and palaces] have been found." (Oxford Guide to Ideas & Issues) “He arranged for Hiram [King of Tyre] to provide architects and artisans, as well as the gold and fine cedar and hardwoods that would so handsomely grace the completed buildings (I Kings 5:10ff.)” (All the People in the Bible)


--Solomon gained worldly wealth and honor; but he asked with his whole heart that he might "discern between good and bad."

• Mortals may earn peace and rest, the foretaste of Heaven, but they must not expect to avert the immutable law of moral purification, and to have the full fruitage of Love at the first step.

---We must break up the fallow ground, sow the seed of pure motives, cultivate honest hearts, and learn to labor patiently, and to wait for God's way before we are ready to enjoy the blessings of Love.

• We must first overcome the little errors in daily life that are uncovered.

---As we do this, we shall learn that this life-problem is not solved in a day; that one sacrifice is not sufficient to insure continued peace; that we cannot silence all the pains of sense while going on in what belief calls the pleasures of life; that the mere intellectual discernment of the statements of Christian Science has but little efficacy; but that the manifestation of Love makes "a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert."


--In a dream, God asks King Solomon what gift he’d like.

• And Solomon can choose anything – courage, strength, even money or fame.

---He chooses an understanding heart.

• Wisdom, so he can make good decisions for his people.

---And God is so pleased with Solomon’s choice that He gives him every other good gift, too. (See I Kings 3:5-15.)
Solomon didn’t get an understanding heart from God.

- When he turned to God, he found that understanding heart.
  -- It was already part of him as the reflection of God.
- So what that story was asking me to do was this: to accept that God was giving me everything I needed – each moment – to do whatever I needed to do.

Solomon Enlists the Help of Hiram, King of Tyre, in the Building of the Temple (I Kings 5:2-6 [to 1st:], 10-12)

RELATED SCRIPTURE: II Chron 2: 1-18

AUTHOR AND TIME LINE: "It seems that the author was most likely an unnamed prophet of the Lord who lived in exile with Israel in Babylon. Kings was written between 561-538 B.C." (MacArthur Bible Commentary) The event occurred @ 955 BC.

“Solomon enlists the help of Hiram, king of Tyre, in the building of the temple. The account presupposes what has been related in the earlier history: Hiram had provided materials and craftsmen for David’s palace (II Sam 5:11); David had intended to build a temple but had been prevented (II Sam 7:1-7; the reason given there is different from that given here, and I Chron 22:8; 28:3, gives a different reason again); God had promised David that his son and successor would build the temple (II Sam 7:13; I Kings 8:18,19).” (Eerdmans Commentary)

"By now Solomon has gathered enough wealth and wisdom to undertake larger building projects." (Oxford Bible Commentary)

“The cedars of Lebanon [v.6] symbolized majesty and might (Ps 92:12; Ezek 31:3).” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

Hiram

[High’rum] ("high-born")

"Hiram, king of Tyre (969-935 [BC]),...lived on friendly terms with both David and Solomon." (Eerdmans Dictionary) He entered into an alliance with David, and assisted him in building his palace by sending him able workmen, and also cedar-trees and fir-trees from Lebanon. “As a result of this peaceful interlude, the Phoenicians prospered.” (All the People of the Bible)

After the death of David he entered into a similar alliance with Solomon, and assisted him greatly in building the temple. He also took part in Solomon's traffic to the Eastern Seas.


--To our Leader, as the great metaphysical architect and "wise master builder" of this age, belongs the credit for having again made known to mankind that indestructible temple "whose builder and maker is God."

- This is "the living church," "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," which rests upon a wholly spiritual foundation.
  --The "lively stones" of which this building is composed have been quarried from the solid rock of spiritual consciousness, and have been drawn by divine Love from the four corners of the earth.
- As in the case of Solomon's temple, the stones for this spiritual house were all dressed before they were brought thither, so that the building has arisen noiselessly, without the sound of ax or hammer.
  --Every true idea that ever has been or ever will be brought forth or conceived of,
Bible Characters for your weekly Bible study — August 31 – September 6, 2009

has its home in this temple, which is "all glorious within."


--During any war, it's easy to stigmatize the other side's troops as evil, degenerate, or ruthless, and sometimes I have to confess that I have found myself doing that.

  • Not long ago, however, I found in the Bible a statement of a political alliance between Solomon and Hiram, king of the neighboring nation of Tyre, in which Solomon is recorded as saying, "But now the Lord my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil current" (I Kings 5:4).

--While this described the political situation at that time in Israel's history, I realized that it could be a declaration of the ideal.

  • It is challenging to take it from mere history to a signal of God's spiritual reality.

---But I have come to see that putting God first results in peace, with no adversary or any evil threat on the horizon.

SECTION III: Internal Strife as Some Jews Take Advantage of Others (Neh 5: 1-9 [to :], 10-12 I pray [to 1st .])
TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: Written by Ezra between 424-400 BC. The event occurred between 445-433 BC.

“Enemy opposition and difficult times in general had precipitated economic conditions which had a devastating effect on Judah’s fragile life. The effect of this extortion on the morale of the returnees was worse than the enemy opposition [vv.1-13].” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

(Nehemiah)
[Nē uh mī′əh] (“the Lord is consolation”)

Nehemiah is the name of three men in the Bible; the most prominent is the "governor of the Persian province of Judah (Yehud) in the mid-fifth century [BC], and the main character in the book that bears his name." (Oxford Guide to People & Places)

While in exile with the Jews in Babylon, he was the Persian ruler Artaxerxes I Longimanus’ personal cupbearer. After hearing of the deplorable conditions facing the exiles who had returned to Jerusalem, he received permission from Artaxerxes to go to Judah to restore the fortunes of his people. “The king not only released him; he sent him back as governor (Neh 2)” with authority to rebuild the city walls. (All the People of the Bible)

Nehemiah and his work crew organized to begin the work. They were harassed continually in their work by three enemies: Sanballat, the Horonite; Tobiah, the Ammonite; and Geshem, the Arab. But neither their ridicule nor their conspiracy to harm Nehemiah could stop the project. They finished the wall in 52 days.

Nehemiah’s activities did not stop with the completion of the wall. He also led many social and political reforms among the people, including a return to pure worship and a renewed emphasis on true religion.


--WITH the illumination given by Christian Science I find the book of Nehemiah both profitable and interesting.

  • It presents a series of vivid pictures not to be forgotten.

CSDirectory.com weekly Bible Study resources http://www.csdirectory.com/biblestudy/nw-index.html
---We find Nehemiah in Shushan the palace, and there come to him certain men of Judah.

  • He questions them and finds that the Jews that are left of the captivity are in great affliction and reproach; the walls of Jerusalem are broken down and the gates burned.

---At once he is impelled to leave the luxurious Persian court and his honored position as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, that he may work for the Jewish cause.

  • He humbly confesses before God the sins of his people, his family, and himself.


--IN its application to the needs of humanity Christian Science is as broad and impartial as the Sermon on the Mount.

  • Radiant with love, it embraces all mankind in its beneficent ministration, leaving no room for personal, national, or racial prejudice.

---The words of Mrs. Eddy in our textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" (p. 227), "Citizens of the world, accept the 'glorious liberty of the children of God,' and be free!" proclaim the same universal invitation as the Master's words of old: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

--All the mysticism of false interpretation was forever stripped from [the] words of the Master when Mrs. Eddy wrote on page 571 of Science and Health, "The cement of a higher humanity will unite all interests in the one divinity."

  • Here is found no impractical attempt to establish a perfect social state with imperfect individuals, no evasive postponement to a problematic future existence, no vain dream of distant Elysium, but the very practical method whereby the beginning of a reign of harmony may be established here and now.

SECTION IV: The Little Child as an Object Lesson on Christian Character (Matt 18: 1-4 Who, 10)
TIME LINE: The Year of Opposition (Jesus’ 3rd year of ministry)

“a little child”

“CHILDREN. The spiritual thoughts and representatives of Life, Truth, and Love.”
(S&H 582: 28)

Jesus was in Peter’s house so this could have been one of Peter’s children. “Tradition, however, says that it was Ignatius, the martyr, afterwards bishop of Antioch [southwestern Turkey].” (Dummelow)

“The Sermon on Community Relations begins with the disciples’ question about the greatness in the kingdom of heaven, a question found frequently in Matthew (and in a different context in Mark 9:33,34).” (Eerdmans Commentary) “The disciples were disputing their rank and precedence in the Kingdom. Jesus denies that they are in it at all. They have turned their backs on it altogether. Only by reversing their course and embracing humility, can they hope even to enter it.” (Dummelow Commentary)

Jesus set a little child before them, solemnly assuring them, that unless they were converted and made like little children, they could not enter the kingdom. Children, when very young, do not desire authority, do not regard outward distinctions, are free from malice, are teachable, and willingly dependent on their parents. "A little child has no pride [v.4], knows nothing of worldly rank or
position, and is simple, teachable, and loving." (Ibid) This makes the child a proper emblem of the humble mind of a true Christian. "In using such an object lesson, Jesus showed [his] greatness as a teacher." (Ibid)

Jesus entreated his disciples not to [despise not, v.10] “spurn or belittle another believer by treating him or her unkindly or indifferently.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)


--"EXCEPT ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

- Advanced thinkers have ever recognized the truth thus simply and forcefully stated by Jesus, and they have expressed their concepts of it in accordance with their different viewpoints of life.
  --How the loving, beautiful, pure, childlike thought appealed to Jesus, and indeed how it appeals to all.
- Love is reflected in proportion to purity of thought.
  - We should not love people, but rather the good they manifest or reflect.
    --In the loving humility of little children is the answer of the prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."
    --The only practical way it can be answered is in accordance with the spiritual sense, "And infinite Love is reflected in love" (Science and Health, p. 17).
  - Great is the wisdom of our Leader's statement, that "we can hardly afford to be miserable for the faults of others," and that "he who can wilfully attempt to injure another, is an object of pity rather than of resentment" (Miscellaneous Writings, p. 224).


--Said the Master, “Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

- How constantly and lovingly is a little babe watched and nourished!
  --So should the student of divine Science cherish that consciousness of God born in him, nor should he be impatient or discouraged if he finds that the swaddling clothes of old beliefs and customs still keep him from absolute freedom.
- Entrance into the realm of peace is a journey rather than an instantaneous experience.
  --Beginners in Christian Science have with them the spiritual idea, though to their sense it may seem to be struggling for fuller expression, and if they but know that omnipotence will “gently lead those that are with young,” they will not worry much about swaddling clothes.

SECTION V: Jesus Restores Sight to the Blind Man (John 9: 1-7)
TIME LINE: The Year of Opposition and Development (Jesus’ 3rd year of ministry), October, 29 AD in Jerusalem

“a man which was blind”

This healing probably occurs on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. "As in chapter 5, a miracle takes place in a pool on a Sabbath day, and provokes violent debates." (Oxford Commentary) "The initial scene (vv. 1-7) describes the miracle of Jesus giving sight to the man blind from birth." (HarperCollins Commentary)
“The incurable spiritual blindness of the ‘Jews’ is now dramatically illustrated in the great sign of healing of a man physically born blind.” (Interpreter’s One-volume Commentary) “Like the previous story of the Samaritan woman’s encounter with Jesus, the story of the blind man is a carefully constructed drama with several scenes building to a decisive climax. It continues the themes of light, sight, and blindness begun in ch. 8 and functions both as a positive illustration of Jesus’ role as ‘light’ and as a negative depiction of his opponents’ blindness.” (Eerdmans Commentary)

“Four features highlight this healing:
(1) the problem that precipitated the healing (v.1);
(2) the purpose for the man’s being born blind (vv.2-5);
(3) the power that healed him (vv.6,7); and
(4) the perplexity of the people who saw the healing (vv.8-13).” (MacArthur’s Commentary)

“It is intended to illustrate the truth that Christ is ‘the Light of the world.’ [Jesus] proves his power to open the eyes of the soul by opening the eyes of the body. The miracles, being wrought on the Sabbath day, intensified the hostility of the rulers, which had already been violently inflamed by [previous] discourses.” (Dummelow)

"The blind man does not approach him, but is singled out by Jesus' own will (cf 5:6)." (Peake's Commentary) “The disciples (v.2) need not be Galilæan, but may be Judean.” (Abingdon Commentary) “Verse 2 [also] indicates that “the disciples thought that possibly the man had sinned, either in a previous state of existence (in accordance with the doctrine of the transmigration of souls), or more probably as an infant before birth. To the Jews who attributed intelligence to unborn children, this last was a natural idea.” (Dummelow)

“The term Siloam [v.7] is Hebrew for ‘Sent.’” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"While verses 1-34 dealt with Jesus' restoration of physical sight in the blind man, verses 35-41 featured Jesus bringing spiritual 'light' to him." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

**(Mother of the Blind Son)**

"The mother of the blind son (John 9:2,3,18,20,22,23) figures in the story of Jesus' healing of her son. She testified to doubting Jews that her son was blind from birth." (All of the Women of the Bible) “The blind man’s mother does not appear as a separate character but is included along with the man’s father in the references to his parents. This mode of reference may stem from the story's source or the history of its transmission. In the Johannine context, this female parent, who fears the consequences of faith, contrasts with the other Johannine women, all of whom are believers in the followers of Jesus. The indirectness of her portrayal draws attention away from her specific identity and hence does not disturb the Johannine pattern of positive representation of women characters.” (Women in Scripture)


--The disciples had progressed far beyond the general thought of the world when they perceived disease to be a resultant of sin.

• The Master endeavored always to lift their thought above all material evidence into the realm of spiritual perfection, as when the man blind from birth came before the little band of Christian workers.

---The disciples' question, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born
“blind?” elicited the apparently paradoxical reply which, because it was based upon absolute truth, healed the condition.

• In saying "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents," the great Metaphysician pointed away from the erroneous belief in material birth and living to the realm of the real, where all men have one parent, even God; and as John said, "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not."


They say he is a sinner! Yet I see!
I, who was blind, behold my fellow-men!
Hear how it came to me, this wondrous thing:

To-day, as every day, I sat and begged,
And many kindly passers gave me alms.
And then I heard one say, “Master, who did sin,
This man, or his parents, that he was born blind?”
Another voice I heard reply;
But what it said was strange to me.
It spoke of God’s work seen,
Of having work to do for One who sent.
But who was He who “sent”?
And then a soft hand touched mine eyes with clay—
Just common clay—and a kind voice gently said:
Go straightway, wash thou in Siloam’s pool.
And so I went;
And going, wondered much what he might mean….


No doubt the man born blind
had groped his way
through many seasons of thought,
wondering;
searching for hope and light.
By faith he washed in the pool
of Siloam and by God’s might
he came again to the Jews, having sight.

Consider his dauntless courage
as scoffers derided him,
for he proclaimed the Christ
that healed.
Light had been unsealed;
and Truth revealed.

Under such fiery attack would we
know our Saviour as well as he?
We disciples who think we see?
BIBLE TRANSLATIONS


BIBLE PARAPHRASED INTERPRETATIONS


COMMENTARIES


Henry, Matthew, Commentary on the Holy Bible (in six volumes), 1706. Reprinted by MacDonald Publishing Co.: McLean, VA.


**Dictionaries**


[www.crosswalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com), *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*.

**Handbooks**


**Atlases, Maps, and Geography**


**Time Lines**


Miscellaneous


*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.*
As you employ the simple Bible study method that follows, you can begin to see them as they were: flesh-and-blood people whose lives have a crucial message for your life today. Getting Started. Once you have selected the subject for your Bible Character Study, list the character’s name under the heading PERSON STUDIED. Then choose and list the passages of Scripture you will use for your study. A good Bible dictionary or encyclopedia or an exhaustive concordance will tell you where the person is mentioned. The index in a study Bible may also help. (It is best to do your study in rough draft for