



# Reality is Real: Moving from Belief to Understanding

Sunday, March 26th, 2023

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## Reality is Real: Moving from Belief to Understanding

Metaphysical Application Ideas for The Christian Science Bible Lesson on

### “Unreality“

For March 27 to **April 2, 2023**

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*Invitation from Christie: I'd like to invite you to an upcoming Easter talk I'm giving on "[Feeling Genuine Joy in Difficult Times](#)."*

*The talk takes place April 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:15 EST at [3rd Church in New York City](#) and will be livestreamed in English and Spanish. The talk is combined with music by "[Love only Grows](#)" singers (and CedarS Hymn Sing leaders) Matthew Hammond and Davya Flaharty.*

*Here's a [video invitation](#).*

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## INTRODUCTION: GOLDEN TEXT & RESPONSIVE READING

As I understand it, this week's Bible Lesson on "Unreality," which includes over 22 references to the word "belief," focuses on the fact that the only thing that can make us accept unreality—that which is unreal, not true—is belief. In other words, there is no origin to "unreality"—that which is not real—except for wrongly held beliefs. For this reason, we need to discern carefully what to believe so that we don't accept false beliefs, also known as "unreality." Our ability to discern grows as we deepen our understanding of what is real and true. The word "understanding" recurs 11 times in this Lesson, most of which are in the last section, thus emphasizing our ability to progress from belief to understanding through prayer.

The **Golden Text**, or main idea, from first John says, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God..." In other words, we need to be discerning—test the spirits—to know if ideas are from God, divine Truth, so that we are not deceived by "false prophets" or false opinions because, as John continues, "many false prophets have gone out into the world." (Golden Text, I John 4: 1)

The **Responsive Reading** (RR) continues this theme of being alert to false beliefs. We are reminded by the prophet Jeremiah not to let false prophets or diviners deceive us, nor accept random dreams as if they come from a true source.

In Jeremiah's prophecy, he often includes phrases like, "thus says the Lord of hosts...". This simple statement provides us a litmus test as to whether an idea is from God, ever-present Love. For example, the statement "I am full of joy says the Lord" makes good sense. But the statement, "Today is a lousy day says the Lord" does not make good sense. So, adding the phrase "says the Lord" or "says divine Love" is a good way to test whether our statements and beliefs are from God.

Note that the phrase "says the Lord" is in the Responsive Reading three times. In a sense, the prophet Jeremiah is showing us how to discern whether what we are thinking is false belief or it is coming from God, divine Truth. We know an idea is from God when it is peaceful, assuring, calming, purifying, awakening, comforting, and so forth. As we read in Jeremiah, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." (RR, Jeremiah 29:8, 9, 11-14)

As we discern and tune in to God, divine Truth, we will, as Paul writes in Philippians, "Do all things without complaining and disputing, that [we] may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom [we] shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life." (RR, Philippians 2: 13-16; 4:1)

As I understand it, the Responsive Reading offers us a spiritual goal: We can strive to discern what is good and true by listening only to divine Truth so that we can do all things without complaining and disputing, shine as lights in the world, and stick to the word of Life.

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## SECTION 1: TUNE IN TO TRUTH

The first section further substantiates the foundation laid by the Golden Text and Responsive Reading. It reminds us to tune in to the "true God," "the living God," and to not let our hearts be deceived by false concepts. (citation B1, Jeremiah 10:10; cit. B2, Deuteronomy 11:16) It promises grace and glory to those who tune in to Truth. (cit. B3, Psalm 84:11, 12) And it warns, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (cit. B4, Isaiah 5:20)

To Mary Baker Eddy, the difference between the real and the unreal was clear. There is no mixing. (citation S1, 119:21) As she stated, "Everything good or worthy, God made. Whatever is valueless or baneful, He did not make, — hence its unreality." (cit. S2, 525:20-22) She was also clear for the need to be alert to deception. In her words, "We should become more familiar with good than with evil, and guard against false beliefs as watchfully as we bar our doors against the approach of thieves and murderers." (cit. S4, 234:9-12)

With the myriad of falsities that try to barrage us every day—from pop-up ads to human opinions to news reports—we may start to feel overwhelmed by the need to "bar our [mental] doors." But, fortunately for us, tuning into God/Good/Truth naturally enables us to discern and expose that which is unreal.

You have probably heard the analogy of how bank tellers learn to discern whether a bill is real or counterfeit. They don't study the counterfeits. They focus on the details of the real bills. And then, when a counterfeit bill pops up, it is so out of sync with what they know to be true that it stands out as counterfeit. Here's a [video you may](#)

[find interesting that describes some of the micro-features in U.S. currency](#) that help bankers know that they have a real bill. In other words, going beyond belief to understanding—understanding thoroughly the genuine bill—enables bank tellers to identify and expose counterfeits most easily.

Likewise, understanding thoroughly the nature of divine Truth, universal harmony, enables us to discern most easily that that which is inharmonious as unreal. As Mary Baker Eddy explains, “Christian Science brings to light Truth and its supremacy, universal harmony, the entireness of God, good, and the nothingness of evil.” (cit. S6, 293:28)

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## SECTION 2: LEAN UPON THE STAFF OF TRUTH

Truth reveals itself to us. Truth reveals itself to us in ways in which we can feel, know, and understand. I love that section two opens with the statement, “O taste and see that the Lord is good...” (cit B7, Psalm 34:8) We even taste and see God’s goodness! In this section, we witness Moses’ growth from belief to understanding.

In Exodus, we read that God gave Moses even more than tasting and seeing. Moses received several dramatic signs that convinced him that he could trust God’s command that he should lead the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. (cit. B8, Exodus 3:1-10) The dramatic signs moved Moses from mere belief to a solid understanding of God’s omnipotence.

This section includes the account in which God tells Moses to place his staff on the ground, and it becomes a snake, and then God tells Moses to pick up the staff. By now, Moses’ understanding has grown more solid, so when God says to pick up the snake, Moses picks up the snake by the tail—the most dangerous way to handle a snake—and the snake becomes a staff again. (cit. B9, Exodus 4:1-8) The staff becomes a symbol of Moses’ ability to see through a false belief in any power opposed to God.

Mary Baker Eddy summarizes, “The serpent, evil, under wisdom’s bidding, was destroyed through understanding divine Science, and this proof was a staff upon which to lean. The illusion of Moses lost its power to alarm him, when he discovered that what he apparently saw was really but a phase of mortal belief.” (cit. S7, 321:8-24, my underlining).

A classic article that uses this story as a means of describing how to be wise to tricky serpents is [“Wiser than Serpents” by John Tutt, CSB.](#)

Sometimes it can seem as if we’re in a mental struggle between truth and false belief, but as we tune in to the light of Truth—understanding Truth—the mist of confusion fades and the view is clear. (cit. S8, 252:15-8, 31-8; cit. S9, 205:15)

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## SECTION 3: DELETE THE JUNK MAIL

This past Wednesday, a friend shared a testimony about the importance of being alert to stray thoughts that try to undermine our joy and health.

She compared this alertness to using a junk-mail filter with our email. When an inharmonious idea tries to take away our joy or health, we can quickly delete the junk. She added that we don’t need to take the junk mail personally, nor do we have to read it, analyze it, try to figure out why we got it, or get upset about it. Just delete it. It has no honest origins. Just delete it.

The author of Galatians makes a list of things of the “flesh”—that which is limited and distorted—that could be considered junk mail: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like (cit. B11, Galatians 5:17-23) Even though this list might seem overwhelmingly long, as soon as we identify it as just junk mail, it’s easy to know what to do. Delete it.

The author of Galatians also makes a list of good messages: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” These come from a good and reliable source: Divine Spirit. These messages we keep. These messages are undeletable because they come from an everlasting and validated source.

Consider this verse from Romans using the junk mail analogy: “They that [spend their time reading junk mail] do mind the things of [wasted time and junk]; but they that [take in only the messages from Spirit enjoy the blessings] of the Spirit. For to [waste our time on junk thoughts] is [a dead end]; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. You are not [made out of junk], but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” (cit. B12, Romans 8:5, 6, 9)

Perhaps this is stretching the analogy too far, but consider the following sentence when we apply the same concept to Mary Baker Eddy’s words: “[We are] not the offspring of [junk], but of [that which is real and eternal and true], — of Life, not of [junk]. Because Life is God, Life must be eternal, self-existent. Life is the everlasting I am, the Being who was and is and shall be, whom nothing can erase.” (cit. S11, 289:25-27, 31)

Sometimes we may feel like there are just too many metaphorical email messages coming at us at once, but we are steadily making progress in deleting junk. As we are clearer and clearer as to what is true and real, it becomes easier to recognize and delete the junk. As Mary Baker Eddy writes, “If divine Love is becoming nearer, dearer, and more real to us, [junk] is then submitting to Spirit.” (cit. S15, 239:18-20)

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#### **SECTION 4: LOOK TO CHRIST JESUS’ EXAMPLE**

In the fourth section, we have the example of Christ Jesus as the Wayshower, whose healing work demonstrates sifting the chaff of unreality from the wheat of reality. This section includes the account of Christ Jesus healing a blind man. At first, Jesus’ disciples try to figure out a source for the man’s blindness and asked whether it was the man’s fault or the parent’s fault that he was born blind. They believed the blindness, and were looking for a cause such as heredity or sin to blame for the blindness. Since they started by accepting the blindness as real, they were looking for a source for the junk rather than just deleting it. But Christ Jesus understood the man’s true nature so clearly that he was not deceived by the blindness and did not look for a cause for it.

Christ Jesus clearly saw that “Sight, hearing, all the spiritual senses of man, are eternal. They cannot be lost. Their reality and immortality are in Spirit and understanding, not in matter, — hence their permanence.” (cit. S19, 486:23-26) Thus, the understanding of reality triumphed over a belief of unreality.

Christ Jesus was clearly grounded in Christ—the understanding of Truth—and could not be deceived. His clarity was so clear that it still guides us today as we actively gain more correct views and more correct understanding. As we look to Christ Jesus as the Wayshower, we accept harmony and health as the real and natural state of existence. As Mary Baker Eddy states, “The realization that all inharmony is unreal brings objects and thoughts into human view in their true light, and presents them as beautiful and immortal. Harmony in man is as real and immortal as in music. Discord is unreal and mortal.” (cit. S20, 276:12)

In short, we become immune to the deceit of false belief as we understand harmony as the only possible reality.

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## SECTION 5: THE CHRIST-LIGHT ILLUMINES OUR PATH

Section 5 describes the days leading up to Christ Jesus’ crucifixion. It was during this time that Christ Jesus made it clear to his disciples that the Christ—the influence of Truth, the light of Life, the divine message from God to us—is eternal. He told them that he—the pure example of Christ-light—would walk with them a for a little while longer, but as they come to understand the source of all light—divine Truth, Life, and Love—that they always have that light with them. He told them, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” (cit B16, John 12:1-46) In other words, he showed his disciples (and us!) that the light that he exemplified is always with us.

As I understand his ministry, he taught us how to identify the Christ and to see that the Christ is permanent. He wanted us to look beyond his personality, his flesh, and see the eternality of Christ, both before, during, and after his time walking with his disciples.

As Mary Baker Eddy explains, “The Christ was the Spirit which Jesus implied in his own statements: ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life;’ ‘I and my Father are one.’” (cit S21, 26:10-12) In short, Christ Jesus demonstrated that Christ was and is indestructible and real.

The Christ—the influence of Truth, our awareness of Love—is what enables us to sift the metaphorical chaff of unreality from the wheat of reality and truth. It enabled Christ Jesus to sift the chaff of death from the wheat of Life without beginning or end. The light of Christ dispels the darkness. The power of Christ deletes the junk. And the comfort of Christ enables us to feel safety, belonging, and acceptance.

The demonstration of the staff-to-serpent-back-to-staff example made Moses understand God’s omnipotence. Likewise, the demonstration of Christ-healing, both in Jesus’ time and now—enables us to understand God’s omnipotence. Belief becomes understanding as we gain a clearer sense of Christ. As we grow clearer in our understanding of what Christ is, the more we see and experience Christ. The more healing we witness.

Consider watching Bible Scholar **Madelon Maupin’s talk [“The Week that Changed the World,”](#)** that she gave on March 25, 2023. In the talk, Madelon poses poignant and life-transforming questions raised by the Easter story such as,

- “How do I show devotion to Christ, including whatever needs to be sacrificed, and put that affection into practice?”

- “How can I be more receptive to Christ and remove whatever would downgrade or contaminate my sense of worship and church?”
- “How can I stay spiritually alert to detect how the antichrist would try and have me deny Christ—the Truth of myself and others—today?”

Madelon poses several other meaningful questions, and the talk is well worth a deep dive. I bookmarked this talk and plan to ponder it often.

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## SECTION 6: THY WORD IS SETTLED IN HEAVEN

Yes, we need to be alert to rejecting false beliefs, opinions, and junk. Yes, we need to delete junk immediately when it tries to creep into our daily inbox of ideas. Yes, we need to follow Christ Jesus’ example. And, yes, we need to see and acknowledge the light of Christ in our daily experience. And yet, in Truth, reality is real and it isn’t going anywhere. Truth is already true and it isn’t going anywhere. Unreality is unreal and has no real power. And “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.” (cit. B18, Psalm 119:89-104)

In other words, we can and should be alert to unreality. And, yet, at the same time, it is unreal. It has no substance, no bearing, and can cause no real challenge to the harmony of being. We are already safe. We are already whole. We are already good. Christ is here to remind us of these facts. Christ is that which makes us aware of the truth of being. As Mary Baker Eddy states, “Christ is the true idea voicing good, the divine message from God to men speaking to the human consciousness.” (cit S26, 332:9-11)

Truth is already true. Reality is already real. And it is through prayer that we realize this. It is through prayer—listening, affirming, knowing—that we sense the permanent truth of divine Spirit. As Mary Baker Eddy states, “Spirit imparts the understanding which uplifts consciousness and leads into all truth.” As we sense the reality and permanence of truth, we move from mere belief to understanding. And, as Mary Baker Eddy writes, “Understanding is the line of demarcation between the real and unreal.” (cit. S27, 505:16-22)

Through this understanding of our true being, we can feel at home in the consciousness of Good, with a full sense of acceptance and belonging as we transcend all limited and false beliefs—also known as junk—that try to contaminate our awareness of Truth. (cit. S29, 247:15)

Understanding reality is the acceptance of Christ—the influence of Truth. Accepting Christ—the influence of Truth—is understanding reality. Each moment that we glimpse more of the light of Christ, and understand it even a little more, we experience more and more progress and harmony and peace. Truth is true. Reality is real. And it is through Christ that we discover our oneness with and inseparability from what is true and real. As Mary Baker Eddy writes, “Through divine Science, Spirit, God, unites understanding to eternal harmony. The calm and exalted thought or spiritual apprehension is at peace. Thus the dawn of ideas goes on, forming each successive stage of progress.” (cit 30, 506:10)

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**Warren’s P.S. Below is an Easter-season offer** to see for free the outstanding BibleRoads Easter talk that Christie Hanzlik recommends in her Met this week!

**GIFT OFFER: Madelon Maupin and her BibleRoads team wrote:**

**“We’d like to GIFT YOU this Easter talk at no cost if you become a member of BibleRoads.** This monthly webinar series with a 2023 focus: **“Women Of The Bible.”** As a new member, you will receive **Access to the Easter talk: “The Week That Changed The World”.**

- **Access to Biblical Matriarchs Part 1** (Sarah, Rebekah and Hagar)
- **Access to Biblical Matriarchs Part 2** (Leah, Rachel and Tamar)
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*(Note: The webinars are on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 4pm Pacific and last one hour; everything is recorded if you cannot join us for the live presentation.)*

Click [HERE](#) to join the BibleRoads Biblical Community & receive all this.

**NOTE: This special offer is only valid until Good Friday, April 7th.**

**BACKGROUND of BONUS GIFT OFFER:**

Here are some of the **excellent questions** posed in this talk with a link whereby non-members can watch it and, if they wish, share their gratitude.

Christie Hanzlik recommended in her [CedarS Met this week:](#)

**“Consider watching Bible Scholar Madelon Maupin’s talk [“The Week that Changed the World,”](#) that she gave on March 25, 2023. In the talk, Madelon poses poignant and life-transforming questions raised by the Easter story such as,**

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“Madelon poses several other meaningful questions, and the talk is well worth a deep dive. I bookmarked this talk and plan to ponder it often.” (Click on <https://seeker.bibleroads.com/twtctw-rbr23> )

**GEMs of BIBLE-BASED application ideas (from Cobbey Crisler & others) will now be POSTED and EMAILED soon. You can always check for current GEMs at [CedarS INSPIRATION website](#), whether or not you’ve [SUBSCRIBED here for this free offering.](#)**

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Also later in the week, look for Ken Cooper’s  
“POETIC POSTLUDE”  
contributions related to this Bible Lesson.

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Thanks to you and to God, CedarS had another best-summer and fall yet! Your needed, ongoing support — whether it’s one-time, monthly, or forever (though an **[Endowment Matched gift](#)**), will help us continue to “love into view” SUSTAINABLE, DIFFERENCE-MAKING BLESSINGS for hundreds of families and thousands of individuals, for generations to come, all across the U.S. and the world.

*After hosting this Fall another wonderful Bible Study Workshop, a touching and joyous Celebration of Life Service, and a great Methodist Women’s Retreat, CEDARS IS SEEKING TO UPGRADE OUR NORTH STAR DINING ROOM TO BE A MISSION-WORTHY CONFERENCE CENTER TO SERVE other SUCH EVENTS. For more about supporting this upgrade, or about making a planned gift, a required IRA distribution or an endowment gift (that will all be MATCHED), feel free to call or text me (Warren Huff) anytime at 314-378-2574.*