



The grace of God  
that bringeth salvation  
hath appeared to all.

—Titus 2:11



Christian Science Sentinel  
**Bible Lens**

**Everlasting  
Punishment**

**October 29–  
November 4,  
2018**

# Everlasting Punishment

from the **Responsive Reading**

## Titus 2:11, 12

*The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.*

“God’s readiness to give and forgive is now public,” says one paraphrase of these verses. “Salvation’s available for everyone! We’re being shown how to turn our backs on a godless, indulgent life, and how to take on a God-filled, God-honoring life.”

from **Section 1**

## 4 | I John 3:9

*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

•••

*The man who is really God’s son does not practise sin, for God’s nature is in him, for good, and such a heredity is incapable of sin.*

—J. B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English*

In an earlier chapter, the writer warns of the need to face up to sin: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1:8). Christians are not to hide actions that fall short of expressing their divine inheritance, but to recognize that their “seed”—their spiritual nature and heritage—is Godlike. This recognition brings redemption to those who identify themselves with sin.

from **Section 2**

## 7 | II Chronicles 33:1, 2

*Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: but did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.*

Manasseh, son of King Hezekiah, reigned longer than any other king of Judah. By many accounts, he was the most evil of the Judean kings. Though he was likely somewhat powerless against the influence of Assyrian invaders in his small kingdom, the fact remains that he utterly overturned the reforms of Hezekiah—reinstating Baalistic and astrological worship, desecrating the temple with pagan shrines, reviving divination, and practicing child sacrifice. Many Israelites believed that his sins brought about the fall of Jerusalem and the exile of Judah (see II Kings 21:10–16).

The short record of Manasseh’s reign in Second Kings omits any mention of the repentance detailed in Second Chronicles. Though scholars disagree on the authenticity of the Chronicler’s account, it clearly points to God’s forgiveness and the regeneration of even the most hardened sinner—a message that would have resonated strongly with the Hebrew people.

To learn more about the *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lessons, go to [biblelesson.com](http://biblelesson.com).

# An exploration of Bible citations from the *Christian Science Quarterly*® Bible Lessons

“... a lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends.” —Mary Baker Eddy

## from Section 3

### 11 | Ezekiel 33:15

*If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.*

In ancient times, pledges were valuable items (clothing or livestock, for instance) given as security for a loan. Restoring these pledges, like returning stolen items, was an example of living righteously. Ezekiel is reminding his listeners that no one is beyond forgiveness. Wrongdoers who repent will “surely live.”

## from Section 4

### 15 | Matthew 9:10, 11

*It came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?*

To share a meal was to join in a sacred fellowship—to eat ritually purified food with those considered pure. Hebrew elders would have been at least puzzled—and most likely outraged—that Jesus flouted Hebrew tradition so flagrantly.

Jesus’ response, “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice” (v. 13), is a reference to Hosea 6:6. According to one scholar, it is a reminder that “it is God’s nature to be merciful and that Jesus is acting out God’s mercy by associating with sinners.”

## About Titus

### *Responsive Reading*

Titus was a Greek from near Antioch who, like Timothy, was probably converted to Christianity through Paul’s direct ministry. Described as one of the apostle’s trusted helpers (see II Corinthians 8:23), he was given marked authority to act for Paul in settling a troubling dispute with the Corinthian church (see II Corinthians 7:6–15).

As a Gentile, Titus served as a test case for the legitimacy of uncircumcised Christians. Many Jewish converts considered Christianity to be part of Judaism, and those in Galatia demanded that he be circumcised as proof of his commitment to the Jewish faith. Paul argued against this practice repeatedly throughout his letters to the Galatian and Roman Christians (see examples in Galatians 6:12–16 and Romans 2:25–29). Titus was not compelled to undergo circumcision (see Galatians 2:1–3), thus establishing a precedent for other Gentile Christians.

Most sources attribute the letter to Titus to an anonymous writer. Intended for the churches on the island of Crete, its charge was to “set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city” (Titus 1:5). To this end, the entire second chapter of Titus exhorts church leaders to embrace Christly qualities—temperance, charity, patience, sincerity, and more—and to encourage the people to live as redeemed through Christ.

### Resources quoted in this issue

**RR:** *The Message*, copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

**Cit. 4:** *The New Testament in Modern English* by J. B. Phillips copyright © 1960, 1972 J. B. Phillips. Reprinted in North America by permission of Touchstone, a Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc. All other rights administered by The Archbishops’ Council of the Church of England. Used by permission.

**Cit. 15:** Mays, James Luther, et al., eds. *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Vol. 27, Matthew. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1982–.



# On the wings of mercy

By Janet Heineman Clements

From the April 1996 issue of *The Christian Science Journal*

Can we think of a single wrong committed toward us that would be greater than those committed toward Christ Jesus? Yet look at what his attitude and actions were in response to the many indignities and injustices he received. He demanded no apology from his offenders but rather forgave them, healed them, prayed for them.

How could Jesus be merciful in the face of such wrongs? What gave him spiritual poise and freedom from anger? Wasn't it that he steadfastly identified man as the image of God, and understood that evil is always impersonal, no part of God's man? Jesus responded with mercy because his vision of man was clear. It was spiritual.

Jesus instructed his followers, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36). But how are we to be merciful when the wrong committed seems so wrong, when we feel betrayed, lied to, deceived? Our thoughts may be filled with the aggressive clamor of self-righteousness, condemnation, anger, hate, to be expressed in words and actions.

The Bible states, "We have the mind of Christ" (I Corinthians 2:16). With this "mind of Christ"—the divine Mind, which man reflects as God's likeness—we are divinely empowered to dismiss the insistent lies of the carnal mind and to cherish mercifully the true identity of one another as perfect. If our Father-Mother God is merciful, as Jesus stated, then it's natural for us to express this attribute.

The fact that God is merciful, though, does not mean that He sees man doing wrong and then decides to be lenient with him. On the contrary, God never sees man as less than the way He created him—His spiritual, perfect likeness, doing good.

God's mercy expresses His nature as infinite Love, as divine Principle, which forever embraces man and the whole of creation as perfectly good, excluding from them everything ungodlike. Wrongdoing brings its own punishment because it separates us, in belief, from the very Principle of our being, which is the only source of harmony.

Mary Baker Eddy instructs, "Let unselfishness, goodness, mercy, justice, health, holiness, love—the kingdom of heaven—reign within us, and sin, disease, and death will diminish until they finally disappear" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 248). To let mercy reign within us is to express compassion and tenderness in our relationships with each other. The wrong that someone does is really not a part of his or her true nature as God's man. Mercy makes the separation. It separates the error from our concept of the person and sees that goodness identifies every individual. Seeing the inherent goodness of man, we can respond in a way that doesn't fasten the wrong on someone but rather opens the way for actions in line with the Christ, opens the way for healing and peace.

What a power for peace and harmony the living of mercy is in our lives, in our communities, and in the affairs of the world. The Bible states that God's "tender mercies are over all his works" (Psalms 145:9). Because man is God's likeness, it's natural for us to express mercy toward all with whom we come in contact. A great blessing is held for us and for mankind as we go about our way on the wings of mercy!

To read the entire article, which has been adapted to fit this page, go to:

**[jsh.christianscience.com/  
on-the-wings-of-mercy](http://jsh.christianscience.com/on-the-wings-of-mercy)**.