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Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; ... for the Lord hath comforted his people.

—Isaiah 49:13



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

**Doctrine of
Atonement**

**April 15–21,
2019**

Doctrine of Atonement

from the Golden Text

Ephesians 5:2

Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

“Sweet-smelling savour” alludes to the scent of sacrificial offerings. Here the writer is charging believers to embrace Christ’s example of self-sacrifice and obedience to God.

Jesus strongly commended a man who asserted that love for God and one’s neighbor “is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices” (see Mark 12:32–34).

from the Responsive Reading

Romans 5:3–5

Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Patience, writes a scholar, “means the spirit ... which does not passively endure but which actively overcomes the trials and tribulations of life.” He adds, “The character which has endured the test always emerges in hope.... When a man’s hope is in God, it cannot be disappointed.”

from Section 1

5 | Matthew 9:36

When [Jesus] saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they

fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

One writer explains that shepherds provide four basic freedoms for their flocks—from fear, friction within the flock, irritation from pests, and hunger. “Sheep having no shepherd” describes people who are without the essential provisions of Christ’s tender spiritual guidance and protection.

from Section 2

7 | John 10:24, 25, 30, 31

Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, ... If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.... I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

Jesus’ reference to his works as “in my Father’s name” is deemed blasphemy—a cause for stoning—by his adversaries.

Stoning to death was justified in Hebrew law for such crimes as adultery, idolatry, blasphemy, and divination. As in his escape from the angry mob at Nazareth, Jesus left this volatile situation unharmed (see Luke 4:28–30 and John 10:39).

from Section 3

11 | Luke 22:47, 48

He that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

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

Judas had arranged to identify Jesus with a kiss (see Mark 14:44)—the most common sign of affection and friendship. Two Gospels describe Judas also addressing Jesus with the respectful title “Master” (see Matthew 26:49 and Mark 14:45). Only Luke records Jesus’ reproachful question.

The traitor’s motivation has been debated for centuries. Of the few details given in Scripture, those in Matthew 26:15 point to greed: Judas contracted with the chief priests to provide information about Jesus’ whereabouts in return for thirty pieces of silver.

The value of the silver pieces isn’t clear, but it has been compared with the compensation paid for a dead slave (see Exodus 21:32) and the amount given to Zechariah, apparently in scant appreciation of his prophetic work (see Zechariah 11:12, 13).

from Section 4

14 | Matthew 27:46

About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Jesus’ cry from the cross, directly quoting Psalm 22 (v. 1, citation 15), is the only known instance in which Jesus addresses God as “My God,” rather than “Father.”

A commentator writes, “‘El’ signifies strength, and is the name of the Mighty God. He knows the Lord to be the all-sufficient support and succour of his spirit, and therefore appeals to him in the agony of grief, but not in the misery of doubt.”

According to John 19:30, the Master’s final words from the cross are “It is finished.” One source calls this phrase “the victor’s shout ... the cry of the man who has won through the struggle; ... and who has grasped the crown.”

14 | Matthew 27:50, 51

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

The Temple veil covered the entrance to the sacred sanctuary housing the ark of the covenant—a room accessible only to the high priest. This curtain acted as both literal and symbolic separation between Jewish worshipers and the presence, or Shekinah, of their God. The tearing of the Temple veil is seen by some as a proclamation that barriers between God and men have been removed.

Extremely thick and heavy, this curtain is thought to have been about sixty feet high. The top-to-bottom nature of the tear—and the sheer size of the veil—made it impossible to attribute this event to human desecration.

Note: This Bible Lens has additional content on the back page. >

Resources quoted in this issue

RR: Barclay, William. *The Daily Study Bible: The Letter to the Romans*, Rev. Ed. Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox Press, 1975.

Cit. 5: Keller, W. Phillip. *The Shepherd Trilogy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996.

Cit. 14: Spurgeon, Charles H. *The Treasury of David*. 7 vols. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1882–86. Also available at biblestudytools.com/commentaries; Barclay, William. *The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. 2, Rev. Ed. Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1975.

Related healing ideas

Resurrection

Immortal Soul has never seen
True selfhood come and go.
Lift up your head, O you who weep
And near some tomb bend low!

Declare this truth which still rolls back
The stone for one who knows
Man never dies—false mortal sense
Is all that comes and goes.

By Marie C. Emerson
From the June 2, 1956, issue of the
Christian Science Sentinel

Resurrection raiment

Graveclothes
bound Lazarus;
not so, Jesus.
He left them behind—
yet emerged
fully dressed!—
reflecting the Mind
that fashions no less
than fulfillment.

We too can step forth
from daily burials
so quickened
we find ourselves
not only free
but fully appointed.

By Richard Henry Lee
From the September 6, 1975, issue of the
Christian Science Sentinel

Green and tender promise

Gently,
as by newborn warmth of spring,
the mounds of frozen hope
are thawed by Love.
Chill, sterile smother
of the green and tender promise
melts before God's caring.
Unconfined
upreaching growth—
the resurrected thought—
begins to comprehend
vitality of Life.
In beauty of acceptance,
blooms.

By Jean M. Langerman
From the April 30, 1979, issue of the
Christian Science Sentinel

About the word *Easter*

Related to an ancient word for spring, the term *Easter* is a King James Bible translation of the Greek word *pascha* (see Acts 12:4). But *pascha* actually means *Passover*, and that is the way most other translations—and the KJV in every other instance—render it.

The earliest Christians honored both the Jewish Passover (the celebration of Yahweh's deliverance of His people from Egypt) and the Christian celebration of Jesus' resurrection. However, because the resurrection coincided with the Passover Feast, it likely became necessary to avoid confusion between the two celebrations. The word *Easter* would have made the difference clearer. Over the centuries the two observances—and names—became distinct and separate.