



Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

—Psalms 16:1



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

**Probation
After Death**

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Probation After Death

from Section 1

3 | Psalms 139:1, 3

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.... Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

Psalm 139 begins and ends with God's searching of man (see also vv. 23, 24). *Search* here does not imply ignorance of His creation, but rather a focused attention that brings guidance and purification to us. A Bible authority writes, "There never was a time in which we were unknown to God, and there never will be a moment in which we shall be beyond his observation."

from Section 2

5 | I Kings 19:4, 6

[Elijah] went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.... And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head.

Scholars note parallels in Elijah's life with the career of Moses. Both journey to Mount Horeb. Both are shown God's presence. And both men's experiences include the symbolic number forty: Moses spends forty days in communion with God on the mountain; Elijah passes forty days journeying through the wilderness to Horeb. Later, Elijah parts the Jordan River much as Moses parted the Red Sea. (Parallel texts can be

found in Exodus 14:21/II Kings 2:8; Exodus 24:18/I Kings 19:8; and Exodus 33:21–23/I Kings 19:11, 12.)

At Christ Jesus' transfiguration, Moses and Elijah are the two Old Testament luminaries who meet with him (see Matthew 17:1–3, citation 11).

from Section 3

8 | John 11:1, 4

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.... When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Lying two miles east of Jerusalem on a slope of the Mount of Olives, the village of Bethany was often Jesus' residence when visiting Judea. By this time in his ministry, he had received multiple death threats from Judean inhabitants, some threats even going so far as attempts to kill him (see examples in 5:18; 8:59; 10:31). The disciples voice their objections to his return to this area (see 11:8) and their assumption that Lazarus will recover on his own: "If he sleep, he shall do well" (v. 12).

Jesus' foreknowledge of Lazarus's need—and of his own role in raising him—far surpasses the disciples' limited assessment of the situation and overrules their fears. In spite of the perceived danger, Jesus returns to Bethany to help his friends. As one commentary notes, "A paradoxical exchange [was] at hand: Jesus chooses to risk death

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

in Judea in order to save a man from death. He indeed is the good shepherd who is willing to lay down his own life for the life of his sheep.”

from Section 4

9 | John 11:21, 22

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

Martha’s faith-filled words “even now” imply that Jesus could perform a healing even after her brother’s death. But she assumes his response is referring to “the resurrection at the last day” (v. 24)—the far-off future event awaited by most Jews and early followers of Jesus.

The Master’s raising of Lazarus is a profound correction of Martha’s thought. He demonstrates that the resurrection happens in this life—that those who trust Christ have eternal life now.

from Section 5

11 | Matthew 17:1, 2

After six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

Christ Jesus’ transfiguration has been compared with Moses’ experience on Mount Sinai, an encounter with God that caused the Hebrew leader’s face to shine (see Exodus 34:29). But Jesus’ mountaintop experience is unique, crowned by God’s endorsement

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matthew 17:5).

God’s instruction to hear His Son evokes Moses’ prophecy, “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee ... unto him ye shall hearken” (Deuteronomy 18:15).

11 | Matthew 17:4

Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

Some scholars view the presence of Moses and Elias (the New Testament name of Elijah) as confirming Christ Jesus’ fulfillment of Old Testament law and prophecy. The two men prefigured Jesus in both upholding God’s covenant and demonstrating His power.

According to the Gospels of Mark and Luke, Peter’s offer to build three tabernacles springs from either confusion or uncertainty about what to say at this remarkable occurrence (see Mark 9:6 and Luke 9:33). But commentators suggest that Peter may have been attempting to prolong the vision, to mark the site as holy, or to recall booths erected at the Feast of Tabernacles in commemoration of the Exodus.

To learn more about the *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lessons, go to biblelesson.com.

Resources quoted in this issue

Cit. 3: Spurgeon, Charles H. *The Treasury of David*. 7 vols. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1882–86. Also available at biblestudytools.com/commentaries.

Cit. 8: Hill, Andrew E. *Baker Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Baker Publishing Group, 2012.

Transfiguration

On the mount of revelation
God gently speaks
to receptive thought,
to the responsive heart
opening wide with love
as the petals of a flower
at morning to receive the light—
the Word of God—revelation
that maketh error naught.

Today this heavenly light
shines in uplifted thought
as brightly as it did in days of yore
when Aaron, waiting
with the children of Israel
at Mount Sinai,
saw it shining as the sun
in Moses' transfigured face.*

Great is this ageless Christ light
and beautiful the transfiguration
of uplifted thought
divorced from human belief,
theory, creed, and fear.
Great is the light
and gentle its touch
and healing.

Powerful was the light of Christ
when it shone as the sun
on the mount of transfiguration
in Jesus' exalted face,**
bathing a darkened world
in God's own
healing love and grace.

And great is this light today
shining in receptive thought
as the Christ Science revealed,
the same glorious Word
proclaiming the identity of man
to be God's own beloved child!

By Richard Amand Hogrefe
From the April 1997 issue of
The Christian Science Journal

*See Exodus 34:29–35.

**See Matthew 17:1–5.

From the writings of Mary Baker Eddy

Who lives in good, lives also in God,—lives
in all Life, through all space. His is an
individual kingdom, his diadem a crown of
crowns. His existence is deathless, forever
unfolding its eternal Principle. Wait pa-
tiently on illimitable Love, the lord and
giver of Life. *Reflect this Life*, and with it co-
meth the full power of being.

Pulpit and Press, p. 4