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Cast up the highway;
gather out the stones; lift up
a standard for the people.

—Isaiah 62:10



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

**Adam and
Fallen Man**

May 4–10, 2020

Adam and Fallen Man

from the Golden Text

Revelation 22:3

There shall be no more curse.

The book of Revelation, writes a scholar, “reaches its climax in the stunning, powerful vision of the New Jerusalem.” In this holy city, the curses on mortal man outlined in Genesis 3:14–19 are destroyed.

from the Responsive Reading

Isaiah 65:20, 25

There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days:... and dust shall be the serpent’s meat.

Concluding this chapter, the writer conveys great promise and reassurance to the people of God. The prophetic vision includes no premature death (an infant who only lives a few days) or unfulfilled life but the blessings of vigor and longevity.

“Serpent’s meat” is an allusion to Genesis 3:14 (citation 11). This oracle is explained as an affirmation that evil has nothing to sustain it but dust—often a symbol of degradation and death.

from Section 2

8 | Genesis 3:2, 3

The woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

Yahweh’s original warning to Adam was “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Eve’s wording that they were not to eat of it *lest* they die appears to lack the certainty of the warning. Some see this as the degree of doubt that opened her thought to the serpent’s contradiction “Ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:4).

One source observes that of all the mortal traits expressed in this account—disobedience, pride, and rebellion, for instance—“the primal sin may be best defined as mistrust of God and the word of God.”

9 | Romans 16:19, 20

I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

Simple (Greek, *akeraios*) is rendered *harmless* elsewhere in Scripture (see Matthew 10:16; Philippians 2:15). Most translations use the word *innocent* here, though some offer the meaning of having nothing to do with evil.

Paul’s promise of Satan’s defeat employs the Greek verb *syntribō* (rendered *bruise* in this verse)—a strong term that describes complete shattering or breaking into pieces. A commentator notes: “The peace of God is the peace of action and of victory.... [It] is not the peace which has submitted to the world, but the peace which has overcome the world.”

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 | Genesis 3:13

The Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

Beguiled is translated from the Hebrew verb *nāšāʾ*, meaning to lead astray, delude, seduce, or charm. It is most often rendered *deceive* or *deceived*, as in this warning: “Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive [*nāšāʾ*] you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed” (Jeremiah 29:8).

from Section 5

18 | John 9:1–3

As Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

In Jesus’ time, Jewish teachers speculated that sin could begin before birth—a notion reflected in the account of the twins Jacob and Esau fighting in their mother’s womb (see Genesis 25:22). And the conjecture about the effect of parents’ sins on their children recalls Psalms 51:5, “I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

The Master’s response rejects the hypotheses accepted by the disciples and assures them of God’s loving purpose for His creation. As one scholar writes, “Man’s need gives God’s grace its opportunity.”

from Section 6

19 | Malachi 3:10

Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Malachi has just conveyed God’s displeasure at the people’s failure to pay Temple tithes (see vv. 8, 9). These payments, dating from the early history of Israel, were used to support the priesthood and those in need (see Deuteronomy 14:22–29 and 26:12, 13).

A commentary sheds light on the deeper meaning of God’s demand: “When the people show their inner devotion to God by faithfully obeying his laws, the prophet says, and by contributing as they should to his worship, the rains will fall, the locusts will not come, the fields will bring forth their crops abundantly and without fail (Deut. 11:13–15). Then all the surrounding peoples will look at their prosperity and know that God is truly with them.”

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

Resources quoted in this issue

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Are you guilty until proven innocent?

By Karl S. Sandberg, Jr.

From the November 22, 1999, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

The man was blind. Apparently, he was born that way. Thus the debate as to why he had been afflicted. Had he sinned, even before he was born? Or had his parents sinned, and was this a form of punishment? (See John 9:1–7.)

When those questions were brought to Jesus, he responded to his disciples, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” And with those words, and the healing that followed, the Master overturned the belief that sin can hold God’s child in bondage through physical discord and affliction.

Yet today, countless good, honest, morally upright men and women are still in bondage to the insidious belief that every time they experience misfortune, loss, or sickness, it’s because they’re guilty of some kind of wrongdoing, and they’re being punished for it by God. This results in the mistaken conclusion that there are times when we deserve illnesses and afflictions. Just the opposite is true.

Christ Jesus took the debate of his disciples about the man born blind into a whole new context. Instead of looking at a mortal body afflicted with blindness and trying to determine what was the physical cause, Jesus turned his thought to what he knew God, divine Spirit, was causing. God, the source of all good, could not create anything that was capable of evil and sin. Jesus so completely recognized the perfection and wholeness of God and His spiritual creation, that he knew God’s man had to be innocent, pure, undefiled. And the truth and power of this standpoint were proved when it healed the man of blindness.

Just because someone is sick or in pain, it doesn’t necessarily mean that he or she is guilty of some sin. In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* Mary Baker Eddy explains, “It is our ignorance of God, the divine Principle, which produces apparent discord, and the right understanding of Him restores harmony” (p. 390).

Instead of assuming that because we’re experiencing sickness or pain, it must be punishment for some sin, we should instead turn our thoughts to God, the source of all true health and harmony; God, the divine Principle of being. Acknowledge God as your Father, as Jesus did, accepting the wonderful fact that not only has He made each of us in His own image and likeness, perfect and complete, but He is also forever keeping us safe, strong, and healthy. A loving Father protects His children from being placed in jeopardy of losing their health or their innocence.

The Apostle Paul surely had some knowledge of this when he wrote: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1, 2).

If we’re following the way of Christ, we’re *not* condemned. We’re innocent, as God’s children always are.