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BIBLE LENS

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Shining a light on the weekly Bible Lessons published in the *Christian Science Quarterly*®

Everlasting Punishment

October 27–November 2, 2025

From the **Golden Text**

Isaiah 1:16

Wash you, make you clean.

Cleanliness was a common symbol of purity and sinlessness in Jewish culture. God's people were to be free from any impurity—physical, ceremonial, moral, or spiritual. Purity represented their holy status as His creation; uncleanness indicated an unholy state of separation from God.

While Mosaic law included multiple rules for the ritual of outward cleansing (see example in Numbers 8:6, 7), the need for inner cleansing was paramount. Jeremiah 4:14, for instance, voices the plea, "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved."

from the **Responsive Reading**

Psalms 9:7, 8, 10, 11

The Lord shall endure for ever: . . . And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. . . . And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee. Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.

Judge is translated from a Hebrew term related to *mišpāt*, a significant concept in Jewish tradition. Usually rendered *justice* in contemporary texts, *mišpāt* refers to order—and in many biblical passages it points to the manifestation of divine order

and harmony in human affairs.

From Section 1

3 | 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.

To some scholars, *seed* implies here the essential, spiritual nature and heritage of God’s children—the Godlikeness that excludes sin. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the seed image is identified with the Word of God, as in Christ Jesus’ parable of the sower (see [Luke 8:5–15](#)) and the portrayal of believers as “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God” ([I Peter 1:23](#)). One source characterizes those born of God as “divinely fathered.”

5 | Psalms 26:6

I will wash mine hands in innocency.

Translation

I wash my hands to show I am innocent.

—International Children’s Bible®

From Section 2

7 | II Samuel 11:2–5, 14, 15, 17, 26, 27

It came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king’s house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath–sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; . . . And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child. . . . And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. . . . And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also. . . . And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

At this time, David has sent his army against a neighboring country while he remains in Jerusalem (see v. 1). No explanation is given for his decision not to lead his men in battle. But the contrast is marked between David (a king at

leisure in his palace) and Uriah (his loyal soldier engaged in combat).

David's abuse of power intensifies throughout this narrative, from compelling Bathsheba to come to him to arranging for Uriah's death (and sending these instructions to the commander by Uriah's own hand). On hearing that Uriah has been killed, the king seems to callously rationalize his plot: "The sword devoureth one as well as another" (v. 25).

Evidently supposing this chain of events to be over, David marries Bathsheba. Yet God's displeasure is made clear to him by the prophet Nathan—and David humbly repents (see 12:1–14).

9 | **Psalms 51:1, 2, 7, 10, 12, 17**

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. . . . Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. . . . Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. . . . The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Attributed to David after Nathan's reproof for the king's sin with Bathsheba (see II Samuel 12:1, 13, citation 8), Psalm 51 has long been viewed as a leading psalm of penitence. Its plea for cleansing evokes God's assurance in Ezekiel 36:26: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."

David's earnest prayer asks for more than pardon or forgiveness. *Māhâ*, the term rendered *blot out*, means utterly eradicate. Commentaries remark that this spiritual action is not superficial but deep and thorough, bringing complete renewal of heart and mind.

From **Section 3**

11 | **Isaiah 1:16, 18, 19**

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; . . . Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.

Translation

Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil. . . . The LORD says, "Now, let's settle the matter. You are stained red with sin, but I will wash you as clean as snow. Although your stains are deep red, you will be as white as wool. If you will only obey me, you will eat the good things the land produces."

—Good News Translation

Scarlet and crimson—bright red and bluish red, respectively—are often mentioned in biblical details of fine clothing. Scarlet figures in accounts of sacrificial rituals as well (see, for example, [Leviticus 14:52](#); [Numbers 19:6](#)).

Here red depicts sin, though not necessarily because of its association with the blood of sacrifice. Red dyes resulted in strong, permanent hues, and dyed garments could not be restored to their original white. Verse 18 asserts that even fixed and unyielding sins will be removed through divine purification.

White frequently represents purity in Scripture. In a vision, Daniel is told, “Many shall be purified, and made white” ([Daniel 12:10](#)). And the Revelator promises, “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment” ([Revelation 3:5](#)).

12 | [James 4:8, 10](#)

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Translation

Come near to God, and God will come near to you. You sinners, clean sin out of your lives. You who are trying to follow God and the world at the same time, make your thinking pure. . . . Humble yourself in the Lord’s presence, and he will honor you.

—New Century Version®

13 | [Ephesians 2:4, 5](#)

God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Translation

God’s mercy is great, and he loved us very much. We were spiritually dead because of the things we did wrong against God. But God gave us new life with Christ. You have been saved by God’s grace.

—International Children’s Bible®

From Section 4

15 | **Luke 5:12, 13**

It came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

To fall on one's face was to be in a position of total reverence and humility. Often it was a spontaneous posture in moments of respect and devotion, recorded in stories of such Hebrew Bible characters as Abraham, Moses, Ruth, and David. In Jesus' ministry, the disciples who witnessed the transfiguration "fell on their face" ([Matthew 17:6](#)). And Jesus' utter submission to God in the garden of Gethsemane is described with this phrase (see [Matthew 26:39](#)).

Now the Savior's compassion impels him to touch the man—violating the strict taboo regarding those with a skin condition considered highly contagious. Jesus' understanding of this man's innate purity brings immediate healing.

16 | **Titus 3:4–6**

The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Translation

... "when God our savior's kindness and love appeared, he saved us because of his mercy, not because of righteous things we had done. He did it through the washing of new birth and the renewing by the Holy Spirit, which God poured out upon us generously through Jesus Christ our savior."

—Common English Bible

As some do today, early believers underwent baptism by water to signal commitment to a new life in Christ. "The washing of regeneration" signifies inner baptism, the replacement of old assumptions with gospel verities. A source suggests, "This process of renewal in the believer is the work of the Holy Spirit [which] alone can produce a new nature that finds active expression in an entirely new manner of life."

From Section 5

17 | **Psalms 19:8**

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Translation

*The LORD 's instruction is right;
it makes our hearts glad.
His commands shine brightly,
and they give us light.*

—Contemporary English Version

From Section 6

20 | **John 13:1, 4–9, 12–15, 17**

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. . . . He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. . . . So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. . . . If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Foot washing was typical in desert areas, where people generally wore sandals. In homes of modest means, guests were furnished with water to clean their own feet. Wealthier hosts provided servants to perform this menial task.

Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet unquestionably demonstrates meekness and love. (As their Master, he could have demanded this service of them.) "God's love for the world in sending Jesus . . .," a scholar reflects, "is here enacted in Jesus' love for his own. . . . The foot washing removes the possibility of distance between Jesus and his followers, and brings them face to face with the love of God for them."

"Unto the end" has been interpreted in two ways—to the end of Jesus' earthly life and to the fullest degree.

21 | **I Peter 1:22**

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.

Translation

Love each other with a warm love that comes from the heart. After all, you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth. As a result you have a sincere love for each other.

—GOD’S WORD[®] Translation

Ancient Christian churches embraced a wide variety of adherents—not only Jews and Gentiles, but also wealthy and poor, enslaved and free, male and female. In First Peter, readers are urged to express the profound love expected between family members.

Ektenōs, the Greek word translated *fervently*, appears two other places in Scripture, to portray the intensity of the petitions for the imprisoned Peter (made “without ceasing”; see [Acts 12:5](#)) and to depict Jesus praying “more earnestly” before the crucifixion (see [Luke 22:44](#)).

From Section 7

22 | [Isaiah 54:8](#)

With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

Translation

*“Now I will have mercy
and love you forever!
I, your protector and LORD ,
make this promise.”*

—Contemporary English Version

23 | [II Thessalonians 2:16, 17](#)

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

Translation

God our Father loved us and by his kindness gave us everlasting encouragement and good hope. Together with our Lord Jesus Christ, may he encourage and strengthen you to do and say everything that is good.

—GOD’S WORD[®] Translation

Read a related poem, “[A prayer for prodigals](#)” by Sandra Luerssen Hoerner.

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