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—Romans 13:11



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

**Are Sin,
Disease, and
Death Real?**

**October 8–14,
2018**

Are Sin, Disease, and Death Real?

from the Golden Text

Romans 13:11

Now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

...

This is a critical time. It is already the hour for you to awaken from your sleep [of spiritual complacency]; for our salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed [in Christ].

—Amplified® Bible

With the phrase “high time,” Paul alludes not to a point on a clock or calendar but to the dawning of a new age—the transition from the worldly sense of existence to an awakening, stirred by Jesus’ resurrection, to spiritual reality. He stresses the immediacy of this new era in another letter: “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (II Corinthians 6:2).

Sleep, according to one source, “is a vivid image for that state which is altogether opposed to ... readiness.” At the time, most people awakened and began their day at the rising of the sun. “Only slackards,” writes another scholar, “would keep to their beds after the first glow of daylight.”

The apostle rouses his listeners to correct their immoral behavior and embrace a Christly approach to life: “Cast off the works of darkness, and ... put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day” (Romans 13:12, 13).

from the Responsive Reading

Jeremiah 23:23

Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?

With this question, God reproaches deceitful prophets who consider Him merely a local deity who can be evaded at will. God is not only near—He promises “I am with you” (see Jeremiah 42:11 and Haggai 1:13, for instance)—but also infinite and omnipresent, as poetically affirmed in Psalms 139:7–10.

Jeremiah 23:28

The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.

In ancient times, dreams were often considered communications from God. Jacob and Daniel received divine messages in dreams, as did Mary’s husband Joseph before and after Jesus’ birth (see Genesis 28:10–15; Daniel 7:1–14; and Matthew 1:20–23; 2:19, 20). Jeremiah compares “false dreams” to the emptiness of chaff, and voices God’s denunciation of prophets who speak without spiritual authority (see Jeremiah 23:28, 32).

Ephesians 5:14

Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Awake is from the Greek *egeirō*, often rendered *rise* or *stand up*. It appears in descriptions of raising the dead, and is translated as the command “Arise” in some reports of

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

Jesus’ healings (see examples in Luke 7:22 and Matthew 9:6).

from Section 2

8 | Isaiah 26:20

Hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

Using words reminiscent of God’s deliverance of His people in Egypt, the prophet urges patience upon the Jewish people. Just as the Israelites waited in hiding for God to “pass through to smite the Egyptians” (Exodus 12:23), here they are again bidden to hide from God’s judgment of the wicked. *‘Abar*, the Hebrew term rendered *overpast*, is the same word used for “pass through” in the Passover story.

from Section 3

13 | Romans 8:1, 2

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.

Commentators agree that *condemnation* refers to the use of Mosaic law to censure sinners. By contrast, God condemned sin itself (see v. 3), and sent His Son to save mankind from both sin and condemnation through his crucifixion and resurrection. The Master’s words in John’s Gospel affirm, “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation” (John 5:24).

“Believers may be chastened of the Lord,” writes a scholar, “but will not be condemned

with the world. By their union with Christ through faith, they are ... secured.”

14 | Matthew 4:23

Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

Just as today, synagogues were local houses of worship that provided regular reading of the law and talks on theological points. Any man with knowledge of the law could read or speak in a synagogue, a practice that furnished Jesus with opportunities for public preaching.

from Section 4

19 | I Thessalonians 5:5, 6

Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others.

As in his letter to the Romans (see note on Romans 13:11, Golden Text), Paul reminds his readers that wakefulness and vigilance are vital to a Christian life. In his time, a second coming of Christ Jesus was believed to be imminent. Followers of Christ needed to be ready, to be “found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (II Peter 3:14).

Resources quoted in this issue

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Man roused from death

By William J. Nisbet with contributions from Amy Nisbet
From the August 16, 1999, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

I would like to express my gratitude to my wife and for the healing power of Christian Science treatment during a period of severe illness. As I dozed off to sleep one evening, I felt as though it might be for the last time. I was extremely ill, and just wanted to be rid of the feeling. I don't recall how long I was asleep, but I do remember feeling as though I were slowly being levitated above my body. It was as though I were looking at myself lying there with my wife by my side. At first, I felt at peace as I appeared to move higher.

It was then that I heard my wife calling to me, telling me to awake from this dream. Through her prayers and understanding of the divine power, I was instantly taken back and awakened. My fever and all feelings of delirium were gone. I experienced a complete healing, and I am eternally grateful for the healing power of Christian Science and for the love of my wife.

WILLIAM J. NISBET
Randolph A.F.B., Texas

One evening my husband suddenly became ill and asked me to pray for him. He soon appeared to be delirious. To remove any fear, I began reading the Bible Lesson found in the *Christian Science Quarterly* and articles from various issues of the *Sentinel*. In the course of my reading, I came upon this passage from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: "To the Christian Science healer, sickness is a dream from which the patient needs to be awakened" (p. 417).

I realized we were believing that this situation was real and powerful, when it was—like a dream—only real until we "woke up" to the truth of spiritual reality. What is actually happening to each one of us is

that God is continuously giving us life and health. These truths freed me from fear.

I turned back to my husband, and he seemed to have passed on. I remember that this thought immediately came to me: There is no time to be afraid or to doubt God's power. An incredible feeling of calm came to me, and I read the passage again. This time I substituted the word *death* for *sickness*. Death "is a dream from which the patient needs to be awakened." I firmly shouted to my husband, "Wake up, this is only a dream. God is your Life."

He opened his eyes and said, "I feel so peaceful." I asked him if he knew what had just happened. He said, "I just had the strangest dream. I was floating on the ceiling, and I could see my body lying on the bed. I feel fine now; my fever's gone. Good night." He slept normally through the night, and the next morning he went off to work as usual. Nothing has ever compared to the joy I felt that night. The joy in knowing that the life God gives man is indestructible, eternal.

Some other proofs of God's healing power in my life have included healings of impetigo, warts, ringworm, fevers, and relationship problems. I am profoundly grateful for God's love and for all the people who have shared the teachings of Christian Science with my family.

AMY NISBET

Note: After this healing, Bill continued his career in the United States Air Force for twenty more years. Since his retirement from active service fourteen years ago, he has held the position of property manager at a summer camp for young students of Christian Science.