



© SIMONBRADFELD/E+/GETTY IMAGES

I am come that they might  
have life, and that they might  
have it more abundantly.

—John 10:10



Christian Science Sentinel  
**Bible Lens**

**Probation  
After Death**

**October 22–28,  
2018**

# Probation After Death

## from the Responsive Reading

### Isaiah 43:2

*When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.*

Israel's confidence, writes a commentator, is rooted in the promise of Yahweh's presence. Central to Jewish doctrine, the assurance of the divine presence was honored in the sacred space of the house of God and spoken of often. Joseph's father, Israel, comforts him with the words, "God shall be with you" (Genesis 48:21), and God pledges to Moses, "My presence shall go with thee" (Exodus 33:14). Later, the Psalmist sings about the divine presence—and like Isaiah, other prophets affirm it as well (see examples in Psalms 139:7–10; Jeremiah 42:11; and Haggai 1:13).

## from Section 1

### 2 | Psalms 23:1

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

To the Israelites, the metaphor of God as Shepherd—depicting both the tender solicitude of the shepherd and the trusting reliance of the sheep—was natural and familiar. Isaiah prophesied, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd" (Isaiah 40:11). Jeremiah wrote that God would gather and keep Israel "as a shepherd doth his flock" (Jeremiah 31:10), and Ezekiel included a detailed portrayal of God's pastoral activity in his prophecy (see Ezekiel 34:11–16).

Christ Jesus used the shepherd image several times, most poignantly in describing

himself as patterning God's shepherding role (see John 10:11–16, 27–29).

## from Section 3

### 8 | Matthew 12:47, 48

*Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?*

Scholars point out that Jesus was not slighting his relatives during this exchange. His love for his mother in particular is clear when, from the cross, he gives her care to a beloved disciple (see John 19:26, 27, citation 11). Yet he shows that the faithful are his closest family members (see vv. 49, 50). One source notes "how dear believers ... are to Christ; he counts them as dear as mother, brethren, or sisters."

## from Section 4

### 11 | John 19:23, 24

*Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be.*

Confiscation of prisoners' belongings was considered part of their punishment, and the removal of clothing was an especially grievous humiliation.

# 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’ clothes are believed to have included a rectangular cloth commonly draped around the body, and a long, tight-fitting garment usually made of two pieces of cloth sewn together. His coat was seamless, a characteristic of the robes of high priests, and possibly made by his followers to honor him.

Casting lots was like rolling dice. The soldiers’ action, used to determine who would win Jesus’ valuable seamless coat, was seen as fulfillment of Psalms 22:18.

## from Section 5

### 12 | John 19:41

*Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.*

In Roman times, the bodies of the crucified were usually left on their crosses, later to be thrown into a common pit. The generous offer of a tomb for Jesus’ burial ensured respect for the Master’s body. The fact that it was new guaranteed that no one could later suggest the resurrection of someone other than Jesus.



© SUSAN HUMBLE

A burial tomb located outside of Jerusalem’s city walls near the Damascus gate.

### 13 | John 20:1, 15

*The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.... Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.*

Christ Jesus’ question, “Whom seekest thou?” parallels his query of two disciples of John the Baptist (see John 1:38). One researcher sees it as more than a literal question about intentions: “Jesus’ words to the first people who seek him at the beginning of his ministry and to the first person who seeks him after the resurrection ... contain the same invitation to discipleship.”

At first addressing her as “woman” (v. 15), Jesus gently leads Mary to look beyond a buried Messiah to her risen Savior. Although she initially thinks he’s a gardener, Mary recognizes him when he uses her name. The commentator continues, “This interchange between Jesus and Mary reveals him as the good shepherd; he knows his sheep by name, and they respond to his voice.” Mary’s heartfelt response is in one word—*Rabboni*, the Aramaic term for Master (v. 16).

#### Resources quoted in this issue

**RR:** Mays, James Luther, et al., eds. *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Vol. 20, Isaiah: Chapters 40–66. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1982–.

**Cit. 8:** Poole, Matthew. *Annotations upon the Holy Bible*. 3 vols. London, 1685. Reprint, New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1853. Also available at [biblehub.com/commentaries](http://biblehub.com/commentaries).

**Cit. 13:** Keck, Leander E., et al., eds. *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Ten Volumes*. Vol. 8, Luke. John. Nashville: Abingdon, 2015



# Related healing ideas

## Safe with the Shepherd

The Shepherd speaks ...  
clear,  
sweet,  
irresistible, calling His flock to  
thought,  
filling consciousness with omnipotent  
Truth.

The stranger suggests ...  
through subtle serpent,  
roaring lion,  
inflamed dragon,  
powerless lies.

The sheep respond not to  
the voice of the stranger.

They know and cheerfully follow  
the voice of the Shepherd.

By Gwendolyn Young  
From the April 30, 2007, issue of the  
*Christian Science Sentinel*

## From the writings of Mary Baker Eddy

Well is it that the Shepherd of Israel passes  
all His flock under His rod into His fold;  
thereby numbering them, and giving them  
refuge at last from the elements of earth.

*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896, p. 9*

## Hymn 534

My shepherd is the living God,  
There's nothing that I need;  
In pastures fair, near pleasant streams,  
I settle down to feed.  
You bring my wandering spirit back  
When I forsake Your ways.  
And lead me for Your mercy's sake  
In paths of truth and grace.

When I walk through the shades  
of death,  
Your presence is my stay;  
A word of Your supporting breath  
Drives all my fears away.  
Your hand, in sight of all my foes,  
Lays out my table's spread;  
And fills my cup to overflow,  
Your oil anoints my head.

The sure provisions of my God  
Attend me all my days;  
O may Your house be my abode,  
And all my work be praise.  
There would I find a settled rest,  
While others come and go—  
No more a stranger or a guest,  
But like a child at home.

Words paraphrased Psalm 23, Thomas Stern-  
hold and Isaac Watts, alt., *Christian Science*  
*Hymnal: Hymns 430–603, No. 534*