



The steps of a good man are
ordered by the Lord: and
he delighteth in his way.

—Psalms 37:23



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

**Probation
After Death**

**April 22–28,
2019**

Probation After Death

from the Golden Text

Psalms 68:20

He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.

“Issues” (Hebrew, *tôṣā’ā*) signifies a going forth or going out. Here it means escape—the release or rescue from death. In another biblical use, “issues” refers to a source: “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

from Section 1

3 | Psalms 51:12

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

...

Give me again the joy that comes from your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

—Good News Translation

“Free spirit” is usually translated “willing spirit”—having the inspiration, according to a researcher, that “will move [one] spontaneously to think and do such things as are right.”

from Section 2

7 | II Kings 2:1, 11

It came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.... And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and

horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Though not explicitly stated, it’s understood that the chariot and horses of fire are signs of God’s presence. Fire is linked to the Divine in other biblical accounts—for instance, Moses at the burning bush, the leading of the Israelites by night during the Exodus, and God’s voice to His people at Horeb (see Exodus 3:2, 13:21, and Deuteronomy 4:12). Horses and chariots of fire appear again in II Kings 6:17 to show God’s power to Elisha’s servant.

from Section 3

10 | Matthew 25:14, 15

The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Originally, a talent was a measure of weight estimated at 75 lb (34 kg). Over time it became a denomination representing a large sum of money. A single talent equaled about 6000 denarii or drachmas—over 16 years’ wages for a laborer. One source equates five talents with five bags of gold.

In the Middle Ages the meaning of *talent* shifted, and it became a term for God-given gifts. Whether represented by money or individual gifts, however, its image of great value is clear.

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 5

16 | Mark 14:1

After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread.

The early history of the children of Israel records several major festivals honoring their history and commitment to God (see Leviticus 23). The Passover—a one-day celebration of divine protection from the plague that killed Egypt’s firstborn sons—was one of the most important. The Feast of Unleavened Bread—seven days of commemoration of the hasty departure of the Israelites from Egypt—followed immediately afterward. In practice the two festivals were combined into one eight-day celebration.

17 | Mark 15:22, 25

And they bring [Jesus] unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.... And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

Matthew, Mark, and John use the Aramaic word *Golgotha* to identify the hill just outside of Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified. The Greek translation of *Golgotha* is *kranion*, the source of the English word *cranium*. Luke renders it *Calvary* (see Luke 23:33), from the Latin word for *skull* (*calvaria*). Whatever the language, the term is believed to allude to either the shape of the hill or a place of execution.

Resources quoted in this issue

Cit. 3: Good News Translation in Today’s English Version—Second Edition Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society. Used by permission; Perowne, John J. S., Alexander F. Kirkpatrick, Frederic H. Chase, Reginald St. John Parry, and Alexander Nairne, eds. *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*. 58 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1882–1922. Also available at biblehub.com/commentaries.

Cit. 10: New International Version®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

from Section 6

18 | Acts 2:32

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

These words are part of the Apostle Peter’s first missionary speech, given on the Day of Pentecost in response to bystanders’ skepticism and mockery (see vv. 12, 13). Recognizing the indispensable role of witnesses as testifiers to truth in Hebrew tradition, Peter confirms that proofs of the Savior’s divine status as the Son of God—including Jesus’ resurrection and the power of God manifested throughout his ministry—have been verified by witnesses.

The Greek noun for *witness* (*martyrs*) signifies one who offers testimony of the things he has seen and provides evidence of his faith. Although the term is the source of the English word *martyr*, it did not refer in ancient times to someone who suffered and died for his beliefs.

19 | Mark 16:9, 10

Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

Nearly always mentioned first in scriptural listings of Jesus’ female disciples, Mary Magdalene is believed to have been the leader of this group of women. She is first to witness to the resurrection, and her role in announcing it to the disciples has led some to call her the “apostle to the apostles.”

You can choose life!

By Joanne Shriver Leedom

From the September 22, 1980, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

If two doors were before you, one labeled “life” and the other “death,” which one would you choose to enter?

“If only it were that simple!” one might answer. Perhaps it is, when one understands the true facts of life and death.

To the materialist, death is inevitable; to him the lifeless, disintegrating material body proves this point. But the inevitability of death is challenged by the Christian who remembers Christ Jesus’ teaching, “If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (John 8:51). Jesus’ resurrection proved he was not speaking in terms of some future salvation from death, but of the present possibility of defeating this enemy.

Jesus was presenting spiritual facts to the world, while materialists—whether of his day or of ours—look at matter for what seems to them to be reality. There is an inevitable contradiction. Which is real, life or death? Here Christian Science intervenes and teaches, in the words of Mary Baker Eddy: “To God alone belong the indisputable realities of being. Death is a contradiction of Life, or God; therefore it is not in accordance with His law, but antagonistic thereto” (*Unity of Good*, p. 38).

God is Life, and the realities of Life contradict the death illusion. The Bible records incidents of revival from death. Jesus met the illusion many times. He restored the centurion’s dying servant to life, raised Jairus’s daughter and the widow’s son from death, as well as Lazarus who had lain in the grave four days. His final triumph over death was his own resurrection.

Were death an inevitable fact of existence, not even Jesus could have challenged it.

In the light of scientific Christianity, the answer to the question, “Which is real, life or death?” must then be *spiritual life*. And if the life that is of God is real, its opposite—death—must be unreal, or an illusion. If one can accept this fact of deathless life, he can then make his choice between life and death. Choosing spiritual life has a great deal to do with understanding reality.

Spiritual life is active, vital. It reflects divine Life. So-called material life is a counterfeit of the activity and vitality that are man’s true being. Therefore choosing spirituality is choosing life, since spiritual being can no more disintegrate into death than God can be destroyed.

A mistaken theological view says that perfect, spiritual life awaits mortals somewhere in time and space. Christian Science teaches that in reality the only Life that exists is divine, and therefore this Life is reflected right here, right now. Mankind’s trouble lies with the lens of materialism, through which it views existence. Take off the lens of matter, and spiritual reality appears. When one understands this fact, he finds it easier to choose life in every instance.

The goal is spiritual awakening, and this awakening ultimately brings the ascension, as it did in Jesus’ experience. The ascension takes place when one no longer sees matter or mortal thought as reality, but completely understands that man was never more nor less than the vital, active expression of Spirit, God.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to jsh.christianscience.com/you-can-choose-life.