

Ye have your fruit
unto holiness, and the
end everlasting life.

—Romans 6:22



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

**Everlasting
Punishment**

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Everlasting Punishment

from the Golden Text

Deuteronomy 23:5

The Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee.

This verse refers to Moabite king Balak's attempt to force the pagan prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites. After Yahweh informs Balaam that His people are blessed and cannot be cursed, the prophet refuses to carry out the king's order (see Numbers 22:1–18).

from the Responsive Reading

Ezekiel 33:11

As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

When the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem in 597 BC, Ezekiel was part of the first deportation of influential citizens to Babylon. A few years later God called him to be a prophet to the exiles (see Ezekiel 1:1–3; 2:3). Here, God speaks to them through Ezekiel, assuring them that He desires the repentance, not the death, of wrongdoers.

As used in this verse, the charge “turn ye” (Hebrew, *šûb*) means to turn back or turn away, though not necessarily to return to a starting point. One translation has, “Turn back (change your way of thinking), turn back [in repentance] from your evil ways!”

A commentary notes that there is “no pre-determination, no closing off of the possibility of change, even after the verdict has been announced by either priest or prophet.... What is important is always the present orientation of one's life.”

from Section 2

7 | Exodus 32:1

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us.

After Moses gave the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel, he was called by God to Mount Horeb to receive “tables of stone” containing the law and the commandments (see 24:12, 18). Because he was away for well over a month, the people became doubtful about his return: “Moses brought us out of Egypt, but nobody knows what has happened to him” (32:1, Contemporary English Version).

The Israelites' resort to idolatry “is truly a dark moment for Israel,” according to one commentary. “The golden calf,” writes another, “becomes a central symbol of Israel's disobedience.”

7 | Exodus 32:7

The Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.

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

Scholars note Yahweh’s reference to “thy people”—not “My people”—as a pointed indication of their disloyalty to Him. The word *corrupted* (Hebrew, *šāḥat*), meaning ruined or perverted, is also used to describe the sinful state of humankind that brought about the flood (see Genesis 6:11, 12).

7 | Exodus 32:20

And [Moses] took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

Moses’ destruction of the golden calf is total—he reduces it to dust, which he scatters on a stream that is apparently flowing from Mount Horeb. His charge to drink the water may have served to emphasize that the idol had been diminished to nothing.

from Section 3

12 | Matthew 5:27, 28

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Part of the intent of Hebrew law about adultery was to ensure that all children born to a woman belonged to her husband. Although both people involved were considered guilty in cases of adultery, the woman was most likely to be accused and punished.

Jesus’ teaching doesn’t change or abolish Jewish statute, but radically expands it. The Master introduces a deep and comprehensive perspective: that the motive of the

heart, not merely an act, makes one guilty before the law of God.

13 | John 8:6

Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

Jesus’ purpose in writing on the ground isn’t known. But some sources point to words of the prophet Jeremiah as an explanation: “O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth” (Jeremiah 17:13).

from Section 6

20 | Jude 1:24, 25

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

Original Greek meanings shed light on this verse. *Falling* (*aptaistos*) alludes to literal stumbling or figurative falling away—in this case, from Christly teachings.

Faultless (*amōmos*) describes the blemish-free state of animals deemed perfect enough to offer in sacrifice. It occurs in a depiction of Christ as “a lamb without blemish and without spot” (I Peter 1:19).

Resources quoted in this issue

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The real exposure

By Sandra Peterson

From the October 25, 1993, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

Mulling over the misdeeds of someone else one day, I was brought up short by a statement in *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896* by Mary Baker Eddy. She writes, “We must love our enemies in all the manifestations wherein and whereby we love our friends; must even try not to expose their faults, but to do them good whenever opportunity occurs” (p. 11).

Not expose their faults? I could understand loving another in spite of what I might see as shortcomings. But wasn’t exposure of evil necessary?

Yet the admonition was clear. Consistent love, not disclosure of faults, was required.

Christ Jesus sometimes pointed out sin in those around him. But he didn’t hold the prevailing view that sin was an indelible part of individuality. The scribes and Pharisees once brought before him a woman whose adultery they had uncovered. According to Mosaic law she was to be stoned, but they asked what Jesus would do with her. Instead of answering their question directly, he stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then he said that whoever carried out that punishment should himself be without sin.

In this way he indicated that no one was entirely exempt from sin. But he also made plain that sin *could* be left behind. After the woman’s accusers, “being convicted by their own conscience,” left without condemning her, we’re told that Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (John 8:9, 11). To me, Jesus implied in this incident that sin could be put off because it is not built into man’s real selfhood, which is spiritual.

The exposure that matters—that in which sin is found powerless—is the exposure of evil to the healing, saving Christ.

This divine influence does more than uncover sin to mortal view. It uncovers the lie behind it, the lie that existence is material and man a product of the flesh.

To this end, it’s important that we cultivate the Christly perception that sees man as the offspring of God, spiritual and innocent.

So what about those faults that had been engaging my attention? They simply seemed less interesting. What did seem freshly interesting was the reality of man as upright and pure, made by God. This truth was so compelling that my resolve to let *no* beliefs to the contrary remain unchallenged became stronger.

In his healing ministry and in his final ascension, Christ Jesus showed us that the entire sense of fleshly selfhood, with its blend of good intentions and sad shortcomings, terribly misrepresents man. Man, he made plain, is not fleshly but spiritual. This is the blazing reality that exposes *as a lie* the minor faults and major sins of humankind. In reality man is the faultless image of God.

Every time we subordinate a false sense of man to the Christlike perception of identity, we bring into our world more of that purifying spiritual light that Jesus radiated. We engage in the real exposure of evil, exposure to that light of Christ, Truth, in which evil’s awful claims are seen to be fraudulent and powerless. We’re committed to becoming so transparent a witness to the Christ that the darkness of earthly living, with all its flaws and faults, is increasingly lost in light.

To read the entire article, which has been adapted to fit this page, go to **jsh.christianscience.com/the-real-exposure**.