



Thanks be to God,
which giveth us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

—I Corinthians 15:57



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

Are Sin,
Disease,
and Death
Real?

**April 6–12,
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Are Sin, Disease, and Death Real?

from the Responsive Reading

Mark 1:11

There came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Spoken at Jesus' baptism, this divine announcement follows the descent of the Holy Spirit. In this and Luke's account, God addresses Jesus directly; in Matthew's Gospel the voice declares, "This is my beloved Son" (3:17). At this decisive moment, a commentator notes, Christ Jesus is identified, approved, and equipped for his ministry.

The Master's identity is immediately challenged during his wilderness experience with the devil's contemptuous phrase "If thou be the Son of God" (Matthew 4:3, 6, Responsive Reading). After Jesus' triumph over temptation, he is recognized as God's Son several times—most notably in Peter's declaration "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (16:16).

from Section 2

5 | Matthew 11:2, 3

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Scholars have long puzzled over John's question to Jesus. "He that should come" describes the prophesied Messiah—a status the Baptist had recognized earlier (see John 1:29–34). But Jesus' quiet ministry differed greatly from Messianic expectations of fiery judgment and reform. And

Jesus had not publicly announced himself as the promised Savior nor received any acknowledgment from Jewish religious authorities.

Christ Jesus' reply in verses 4 and 5 unequivocally confirms his divine status. He says in effect, "Tell John what I am doing," and links his healing works to the prophecies of Isaiah 35:5 and 61:1.

Jesus concludes his answer to John, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me" (Matthew 11:6). *Offended* is translated from the Greek word *skandalizō*, alluding to a snare or stumbling block. Some sources see the Master's words as a tender warning not to let human predictions about his ministry hinder wholehearted acceptance of his spiritual identity and message.

from Section 3

8 | Isaiah 30:1

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin.

Woe was not a casual word in ancient times; it expressed extreme misery or grief. Like Isaiah, many God-sent messengers—including Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and several of the minor prophets—employed it repeatedly to introduce warnings to the children of Israel. In the New Testament, Jesus denounced synagogue rulers with this word (see Matthew 23:13–29).

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 4

11 | Luke 22:50, 51

One of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

All four Gospels record this event, though only Luke describes Jesus’ healing of the servant’s ear. And only the account in John names the disciple as Simon Peter and the servant (an otherwise unknown man) as Malchus (see 18:10).

Luke 22:38 notes that the disciples had two swords. Carrying weapons on a feast day was forbidden by Jewish law, though it isn’t certain that the Passover had begun. In any case, Jesus’ response—rendered “No more of this!” by some translators—halts the disciple’s violence. And the Master’s healing of the servant underscores his point.

from Section 5

13 | John 20:15, 16

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. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

At first addressing her as “woman,” 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. Her heartfelt reply is in one word—*Rabboni*, the Aramaic term for *Master*.

Jesus then cautions her, “Touch me not” (v. 17). The Greek verb rendered *touch* (*haptō*) can mean attachment, and biblical usage sometimes implies clinging. Scholars understand Jesus’ words as a charge not to hold on to a physical sense of him or expect him to continue a human presence among his followers. Relinquishing human attachment frees Mary to leave him—to share the glorious news of his resurrection with the other disciples.

from Section 6

14 | Matthew 28:19, 20

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Jesus’ command to his disciples to “teach all nations” is often called the Great Commission. As the Greek verb *teach* (*matheuo*) in verse 19 alludes to being or making a disciple, the Master’s charge can be translated “make disciples of all nations or people.” What could have seemed like an insurmountable task is made possible by the promise of Christ’s presence with each believer “even unto the end of the world.”

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Resources quoted in this issue

RR: Barclay, William. *The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Mark*. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew, 1955. Revised and updated by Saint Andrew, 2001. Reprinted as *The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Mark*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001–04.

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