

The
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“The Scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35.

“Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105.

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“I know
that my
Redeemer
liveth!”

Job 19:25



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To set forth in simple and plain language the pure doctrine of God's Word as taught by the true Lutheran Church in full accordance with the **Book of Concord of 1580** and the **Brief Statement of 1932.**

To show, **on the basis of Scripture**, what true Christians are to believe and how, out of love for their Savior Jesus Christ, they are to lead Godly lives.

To furnish aids for Bible study and articles for Scriptural devotion and meditation.

To demonstrate, by our Scriptural stand, that our **Concordia Lutheran Conference** is not a sect or false church body, but that the congregations which form it confess, teach, and practice the Word of God in its full truth and purity and use the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. All who do this are the true visible Church on earth.

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To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are *"perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."*

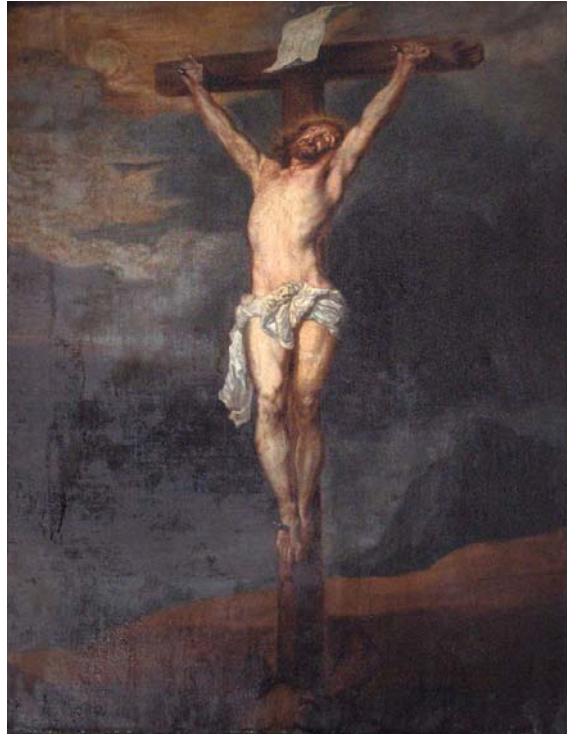
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To expose particularly the false teaching and practice of the various so-called "Lutheran" church bodies by comparing their teachings and practices with what is plainly recorded in the Word of God, in the Lutheran Confessions, and in the old orthodox Lutheran writings.

To expose false teaching and practice wherever it makes its appearance and to keep abreast of the current happenings in the church and among the nations as signs of the times.

To be truthful and factual in our reporting and freely to correct any misinformation of which we are not aware and which has been called to our attention. Also to clarify any information or statement of doctrine or practice which may be unclear to our readers or which may create a wrong impression.

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The Accomplishment of Our Redemption

*“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said: ‘It is finished!’
And He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.” — John 19:30*

“I suppose certainty [of salvation] is important to some people,” a life-long E.L.C.A. Lutheran recently said to me. This was his response to the witness I had given regarding what Jude calls *“the common salvation... the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (v. 3) and the *“most holy faith”* (v. 20), the doctrine which is believed [*fides quae creditur*] (Cf. Ephesians 4:5 – *“one faith”*). I had given *“an answer [a defense]...of the hope that is in [me]”* (I Peter 3:15). I had given him the words of eternal life on the basis of which anyone may declare of Jesus Christ *“[I] believe and [am] sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God”* (John 6:69).

The response that the aforementioned E.L.C.A. Lutheran gave was both shocking and sad! One would think that all Christians would not only *want* certainty of salvation but would, on the basis of God's faithful and absolutely trustworthy Word, *have* certainty of salvation! Titus tells us that "*the faith of God's elect [is also] the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began*" (1:1b-2).

God wants us to be certain of our salvation on the basis of His Word. The Apostle John says: "*And this is the record: that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ... These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God*" (I John 5:11, 13). May God keep us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end (Luther: Third Petition), so that we may ever have certainty regarding our salvation in Christ Jesus on the basis of His Word. To that end, we study "The Accomplishment of Our Redemption" recorded by the Holy Ghost in John 19:30.

The Evangelist John records the sixth phrase spoken by the Lord Jesus while suffering on the cross on Good Friday: "*When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, 'It is finished!' And He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.*" A key to understanding this verse is found in verse 28: "*Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.*" Our Lord, who knows all things (John 21:17), is fully aware of what He needs to do in order to "*save His people from their sins*" (Matthew 1:21). As He is about to lay down His life (John 10:18) as the ransom for all (I Timothy 2:6), He knows "*that all things [are] now accomplished*" (John 19:28a) for the reconciliation of the world. He knows that His propitiatory sacrifice has paid to divine justice the price demanded.

Everything that the Savior says and does fulfills what Holy Scripture foretells. The Savior knows that now, in "*the fulness of the time*" (Galatians 4:4), nothing remains for Him to do or to suffer except the final act of yielding up His soul. He has finished His Father's business (Luke 2:49), He has fulfilled His Father's commandment (John 14:31), He has received the baptism He has so painfully longed to receive (Luke 12:50)! The eternal decree of redemption is being executed in the fulness of time "*that we might receive the adoption of sons*" (Galatians 4:5). The word translated "*accomplished*" is the same word that Jesus declared "*with a loud voice*" (Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37) in our title-text, testifying that

God's plan, revealed by promise throughout the Old Testament, had now been executed in time. This is what Jesus was referring to when He said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work" (John 4:34) and again when He prayed to His Father: "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4). God's determinate counsel and foreordained plan has been fully carried out. The Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8) in God's eternal plan has now been "taken and by wicked hands...crucified and slain" in time (Acts 2:23).

Jesus says, "I thirst." The Messianic prophecy: "They gave Me also gall for My meat, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" (Psalm 69:21) had been fulfilled earlier (Mark 15:23; Matthew 27:34) when, before nailing Him to the cross, they "gave" or offered Him the drug-laced wine which He refused AND later, at three o'clock in the afternoon, after His cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me??" they gave Him "vinegar" to drink (Matthew 27:48). But NOW, "that the **Scripture** might be fulfilled," a singular, particular passage of Holy Writ [*ἡ γραφή*], Christ says, "I thirst," essentially the very same words which He spoke through the Psalmist David in Psalm 22: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death" (v. 15). Jesus is suffering from intense thirst brought on not only by the loss of blood and the dehydration of crucifixion (which the malefactors also suffered). He had just suffered the anguish of the damned in hell for our sakes (Matthew 27:46), and His thirst had already been noticed by at least one of those attending Him (v. 48).

"Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar and put it upon hyssop and put it to His mouth" (John 19:29). Earlier He had refused to drink (Mark 15:23; Matthew 27:34) because the sour wine was mixed with drugs. He wanted to bear the curse with a clear mind, fully conscious of the Father's wrath, and willing to endure all of the agony, even the pains of hell, in the place and in the stead of all mankind. THIS "vinegar" was not that earlier anesthetic but probably the generic wine issued to the soldiers to quench their own thirst; and Jesus now receives a bit of moisture upon His parched lips and burning throat as He prepares to die. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, 'It is finished!' And He bowed His head and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30).

The Savior solemnly proclaims that our redemption is now wrought in history: "All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of

Man” are now “*accomplished*” (Luke 18:31). Earlier, on Maundy Thursday evening, the Lord had told His disciples, “*For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me: ‘And He was reckoned among the transgressors;’ for the things concerning Me have an end*” (Luke 22:37). And now the end has come. Isaiah’s 53rd chapter, a detailed prophecy of the Messiah’s vicarious atonement written in the *past tense*, is fulfilled as historical fact for all the world to see there atop the hill of Calvary, as God hangs on the accursed tree in the person of His Son. “*It is finished,*” God manifest in the flesh (I Timothy 3:16) declares!

The phrase “*It is finished*” is one word in the original Greek, *τετέλεσται*. It is the perfect tense and the indicative mood of the verb “to accomplish” or “to complete.” The perfect tense indicates a finished act with present results. A process has been brought to completion and yet continues to have results that are in effect today and forever. The indicative mood refers to an objective fact, something definite and real. The word, as used in this context, has both a *chronological* sense of something finished in time (with a present continuing result), and a *theological* sense of an “*it,*” that which has been achieved or accomplished for the purpose of that result. Jesus, the Savior of the world, loudly declares that the redemption He came to accomplish, the payment He came to tender, the propitiation or satisfaction of divine justice that He came to render, stands complete and finished in time and for all time, as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “*Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*” (Hebrews 9:26b).

All that was necessary for the redemption of the entire world, for the purchase of every soul from sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, was **accomplished!** By His holy life Christ fulfilled the Law perfectly as to its demands and earned righteousness for every soul of man, “*so [that] by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous*” (Romans 5:19). And by His bloody ransom-death Christ fully atoned for all sins of mankind: “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, ‘Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree’*” (Galatians 3:13). “*And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2). “*The Son of Man came...to give His life a ransom for many*” (Matthew 20:28), and His work is now *finished*. He came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10), and His work is now *finished*. He came to save the world, not to judge and condemn (John 3:17); and His work is now *finished*. Christ Jesus came into the world “*to save sinners*” (I Timothy

1:15). *“It is finished! It has been and stands as accomplished!”* He declared from the altar of sacrifice, the cruel crucifixion tree.

The world has been redeemed (Galatians 3:13), ransomed (I Timothy 2:6) and reconciled to God (Romans 5:10). God’s wrath is forever appeased, and His justice stands eternally satisfied (I John 2:2). And so, at peace again with His heavenly Father, who was *“well pleased”* with the accomplishment of His Son (Cf. Matthew 17:5; Luke 9:31), He willingly gave up His soul into the care and keeping of His Father. He yielded up His spirit with these words, which Luke records: *“Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit”* (23:46); and He died with the full assurance that His work was done and that our salvation had been won. He died because He willed to die, as He Himself makes perfectly clear in John 10: *“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father”* (17-18).

Yes, He knew that God was pleased with His holy and precious offering. He knew that He was going home in His Father’s favor. He knew that the curse was fully borne and that all sins and the guilt of all men had been atoned for completely. The Father confirmed His Word with two signs: the darkness that covered the whole world, a sign of judgment, was lifted (Luke 23:44); and the great Temple curtain was torn asunder after Jesus died (Matthew 27:51), signifying that Christ had opened our way into heaven and given us direct access to God: *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh”* (Hebrews 10:19-20).

By the Gospel, we know that God’s justice has been satisfied, that our redemption is complete, that we have been reconciled to God, that our deliverance from sin, death and hell is a concrete, historical fact, and that our salvation is 100% sure. For God, who cannot lie, promised us eternal life (Titus 1:2) in view of Christ’s vicarious atonement, which Jesus declared *“is finished!”* Our heavenly mansions are already prepared, our eternal inheritance is reserved in heaven for us, our names are already written in heaven (John 14:1-3; I Peter 1:3ff.; Luke 10:20). The God-Man *“offered one sacrifice for sins forever; ...for by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified”* (Hebrews 10:12,14). God says to us in the Gospel: *“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more”* (Hebrews 10:17) for the sake of Christ’s blood *“shed for the remission”* of our sins. *“Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin”* (Hebrews 10:18).

Thus, not only is our salvation 100% *sure*, but the Gospel also tells us that it is 100% *free*. “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast*” (Ephesians 2:8-9). When God’s Son declared, “*It is finished,*” He assured us that nothing more is needed, nothing needs to be added — by us or anyone else — to secure God’s gift of salvation to us and all the world. For the sake of His sacrifice alone, “*the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Romans 6:23).

By grace! None dare lay claim to merit;
our works and conduct have no worth.
God in His love sent our Redeemer,
Christ Jesus, to this sinful earth.
His death did for our sins atone,
and we are saved by grace alone.

(TLH 373, 2)

When it comes to our redemption, reconciliation, justification and salvation, we have Christ’s final word on the subject; and that’s all we need: “*It is finished,*” He declares! God grant us all so to believe, today and especially when our own last hour comes!

— E. J. W.





THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IN PROPHECY

“Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.” —Psalm 16:10

“[David] seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption.” —Acts 2:31

With reference to His future resurrection from the dead, the Lord Jesus declared in the presence of His enemies: *“Destroy this temple, and in three*

days I will raise it up” (John 2:18–21); and on another occasion: “As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:38–40). From the Gospel according to St. Matthew, we learn that Jesus told His disciples: “The Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify Him; and the third day He shall rise again” (20:18–19); and: “After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee” (26:32). The statements of Christ regarding His resurrection that the disciples heard were more clear and direct than those heard by His enemies. However, when “the third day” came, none of Jesus’ disciples were expecting to see Him alive again—being so disheartened and dejected after His crucifixion (Luke 24:17–21). Even after He had appeared to some of His followers, those who had not yet seen Him refused to believe that He had risen from the dead (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:11). And while the disciples did not take to heart what Jesus had previously told them concerning His resurrection, His enemies showed that they remembered His words. “The chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, ‘Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away and say unto the people, ‘He is risen from the dead!’ So the last error shall be worse than the first.’ Pilate said unto them, ‘Ye have a watch; go your way; make it as sure as ye can.’ So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch” (Matthew 27:62–66).

The reason why the disciples did not remember—or even *understand* (Mark 9:9–10, 31–32)—what Jesus’ enemies did was that they were being spiritually blinded by the devil and their own sinful flesh to what Christ had so clearly foretold about His suffering, death, and resurrection. “Then [Jesus] took unto Him the twelve and said unto them, ‘Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated and spitted on; and they shall scourge Him and put Him to death; and **the third day He shall rise again.**’ And they **understood none of these things**; and this saying was **hid** from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken” (Luke 18:31–34). Though the Lord forthrightly told them that He would rise again on the third day, the disciples remained ignorant of what He was saying. Sadly, even the clearest expressions of God’s Word are sometimes not understood by people. The “foolish heart” of the ungodly is “darkened”

even to the evidence of God in nature (Romans 1:18ff.) and “*hardened*” against His Word (John 12:40; Romans 10:18; etc.); and even Christians, because of the opposition of their sinful flesh, are often “*fools and slow of heart to believe*” what has been revealed in the Scriptures (Luke 24:25a).

Now if the disciples themselves had not acted so foolishly but had readily believed “*all that the prophets [had] spoken*” (Luke 24:25b), then they would have known and expected that Jesus would rise again even if He had never spoken of His resurrection during His earthly ministry. It had been foretold in an Old Testament prophecy recorded in Psalm 16:10, where the pre-incarnate Messiah declares: “*Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.*” In these words, recorded by inspiration through the pen of the Prophet David, *God the Son* addresses *God the Father*, testifying that the Father would not let the Son remain dead in the grave, nor would He give His body over to any decay during its brief (three day) sojourn in death. That the Father would not let His Son remain dead in the grave was clear evidence of the fact that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross had been accepted for the “*justification*” (forgiveness) of mankind (Romans 4:25) and that the Son had indeed “*abolished death*” (II Timothy 1:10). The prophecy of Psalm 16:10 is cited and applied directly to the resurrection of Christ both by the Apostle Peter (Acts 2:27–32) and the Apostle Paul (Acts 13:35–37).

After pointing out the guilt of the Jews in crucifying and killing their Savior, telling them: “*Ye have taken [Him], and by wicked hands have crucified and slain,*” Peter, in his Pentecost sermon, states that “*God hath raised [Him] up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it*” (Acts 2:23–24). He then quotes Psalm 16:8–11 (Acts 2:25–28), focusing specifically on the prophecy of Jesus’ resurrection in verse 10 and emphasizing the point that, although the Prophet David was the one who had penned these words, he was not speaking about *himself*, but *Christ* was speaking through him. This is why Peter stresses the fact that David *died* and that *his* body remained *dead* in the *grave*, saying: “*Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on His throne; he, seeing this before, **spake of the resurrection of Christ**, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses*” (Acts 2:29–32).

Since the original prophecy in Psalm 16:10 and Peter's reference to it in Acts 2:27, 31 were both inspired by the Holy Ghost, both of these references are equally authoritative. An examination of these verses in their original languages (*Hebrew* in the Old Testament and *Greek* in the New Testament) reveals some interesting points that are not obvious in our English translation. Particularly in the first phrase, where Jesus says to His heavenly Father: “*Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell,*” the words translated as “*soul*” — שֵׁפֶט [NEH • fesh] in the Hebrew, and ψυχή [psee • CHAY] in the Greek—are used in this context with reference to “*life*” itself (as in such passages as Genesis 9:4–5 and Matthew 10:39). And the words translated as “*hell*” — שְׁהַיִם [sheh • OHL] in the Hebrew and ἄδης [HAH • dace] in the Greek — are here used *not* with reference to the eternal abode of the **damned**, but with reference to “the realm of the **dead**” (Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*), or “the **grave**” (Genesis 37:35). So the phrase, “*Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell,*” was a poetic way of prophesying that the Messiah would not remain **dead** — His body and soul would not remain separated from each other in the **state of death**. Consequently, this is not a reference to Christ's triumphant *descent into hell* in demonstration of His victory over His enemies, but rather to the period of time that Jesus' body lay dead in *the grave*. Remember that His descent into hell occurred **after** the Lord had already been made alive again or “*quicken*ed” (I Peter 3:18–19; see Catechism question 150).

In the second phrase of the prophecy, “*neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption*”, the Old English use of the word “*suffer*” here means to “*allow*” or “*permit*,” such as when Jesus says: “*Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not*” (Mark 10:14). However, a more literal translation of the *Hebrew* word in Psalm 16:10, תִּי [tih • TAIN], and the *Greek* word in Acts 2:27, δώσεις [DOH • sace], would be to “*give*.” The inspired statement, “*neither wilt Thou suffer [give] Thine Holy One to see corruption,*” presents an amazing fact about the body of Christ as it lay lifeless in the grave—the *decomposition* that normally starts right away when oxygenated blood is no longer being pumped through the body *did not take place in Jesus' dead body*. Now this certainly does *not* mean that Jesus' body was not a true human body just because it did not decay as a human body normally does after death. However, the fact that His body saw no corruption in the grave does highlight a unique feature of Jesus' human nature, namely, His *sinlessness*—being completely free from original sin (Luke 1:35) and committing no actual sins in any thoughts, desires, words, or deeds (I Peter 2:22). Temporal death and postmortem decay are direct consequences of sin; they are facets of the punishment that was brought

upon Adam, Eve, and all of their descendants, with Christ as the only exception. Following his disobedience, Adam was told by the Lord: “*Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*” (Genesis 3:19). Because Jesus was sinless, His human nature was not subject to temporal death; yet, for the sake of our redemption, “*He laid down His life for us*” (I John 3:16). Mentioning both His upcoming death and resurrection, Jesus said: “*I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. ...I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again*” (John 10:11, 17–18). Thus our Savior Jesus Christ truly died; and His dead body lay in the grave from sundown on Good Friday to Easter Sunday morning. Yet, in fulfillment of David’s prophecy, His dead body was preserved from even the slightest rot or decay. Indeed, as the Apostle Paul testified concerning Christ: “*He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption*” (Acts 13:37).

Unlike Jesus, all of *us* are thoroughly infected with sin and are spiritually depraved from our mother’s womb; so when *we* depart this earthly life, our bodies will “*see corruption*” —they will rot, decay, decompose, and return to dust. But even though our dead bodies will have a much different experience in the grave than Christ’s dead body (Job 19:26a, 27b), His triumphant resurrection is a precise foreshadowing of our own resurrection from the dead. “*Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*” (I Corinthians 15:20–22). Consequently, the corruption that awaits our bodies in the grave will be completely undone in the resurrection on the Last Day; and “*in Christ*” we shall have victory over both death and the grave. “*We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible; and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!*” (I Corinthians 15:51–57).

Thus the resurrection of Christ is not only a fine example of Old Testament prophecy finding fulfillment in the New Testament, nor is it merely a point of historical interest concerning our Savior’s personal victory over death, but

it has direct application to our own future triumph over the grave. Anticipating the glorious resurrection of all the believers on the Last Day, “we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body” (Philippians 3:20–21). On that day of Christ’s return, the glorified bodies of all those who died in the Lord will be reunited with their souls (Job 19:25–27) and brought into the eternal inheritance (I Peter 1:4) purchased for us by His precious blood (Hebrews 9:12, 15). The verse that comes right after the Old Testament prophecy of Jesus’ resurrection directs us to consider the endless joy that will be ours in the presence of God in heaven. There we read: “*In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore*” (Psalm 16:11). God grant this salvation to us all, for Jesus’ sake!

Hallelujah! Jesus lives!
He is now the Living One!
From the gloomy house of death
forth the Conqueror has gone,
Bright Forerunner to the skies
of His people, yet to rise.

Jesus lives! And thus, my soul,
life eternal waits for thee.
Joined to Him, thy living Head,
where He is, thou, too, shalt be.
With Himself, at His right hand,
Victor over death shalt stand.

(*TLH* 188, vv. 1 and 4)

—P. E. B.



Christ's Resurrection: The Prototype of Our Resurrection

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." — I Corinthians 15:20

The Holy Scriptures are an inexhaustible "gold mine" of truth. This statement is clearly supported by our Savior's words to His heavenly Father, "*Thy Word is truth*" (John 17:17b), as well as His words to



some newly-converted believers: "*If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:31-32). The revealed truth in the written Word of God gives us certain and sure counsel for this life and for the life hereafter. This is evident in the above verse, I Corinthians 15:20, which is the focus of this article. Let us be on guard against **doubt**, that tool of the devil, which he has used effectively in the past to delude souls into "misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice" (Luther, 3rd Petition; cf. Genesis 3:1-6), and which

he wants to keep on using in the future toward His wicked goals, especially to attack and destroy the children of God (I Peter 5:8-9a).

Christ Jesus, "*the Word [who] was made flesh*" (John 1:1, 14a), "*died for all*" sinners (II Corinthians 5:15a), "*bare our sins in His own body on the tree*" (I Peter 2:24a), and "*died unto sin once*" (Romans 6:10). **His actual death** is recorded in all four Gospels (Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 24:46; John 19:30). His body was buried by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in Joseph's own new tomb, with a great stone

rolled in front of the entrance and guards posted at the tomb (Matthew 27:57-66; Mark 15:43-46; Luke 23:50-53; John 19:38-42). We have a simple, yet a profound, summary of these two events (Jesus' death and burial) in I Corinthians 15, where the apostle declared: "*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried*" (vv. 3-4a).

Three days after His death and burial, Christ Jesus, true God and true Man in one indivisible Person, **raised Himself from the dead**, "*as He [had] said*" (Matthew 28:6b; Luke 24:5b-8) earlier, as He had prophesied beforehand (Luke 18:33c), even in the sign which He gave to His enemies: "*Destroy this temple [this body], and in three days I will raise it up*" (John 2:19 and 21). The Lord Jesus kept His Word; He could not, would not, and did not lie (II Corinthians 1:20; II Timothy 2:13; Titus 1:2b). Those who deny or reject the resurrection of Christ from His grave on the third day after His death are liars, are labeling the Triune God (especially the Son of God) a liar, and are identifying the Holy Scriptures as a book of lies (Cf. I Corinthians 15:15); and they will, as a result of their denial and rejection of this fundamental doctrine necessary for salvation (vv. 17-18), "*bring upon themselves swift destruction*" (II Peter 2:1b).

The resurrected body of Jesus was **the same body** that He had received in the Virgin Mary, the same body that died on the cross at Calvary, and the same body that was buried in Joseph's tomb. He prophesied this when He said to the Jews: "*Destroy this temple [this body of Mine], and in three days I will raise it up [the same body which they will have killed three days earlier]*" (John 2:19 and 21). On the first Easter evening, Jesus came to His disciples (minus Thomas) and "*showed unto them His hands and His side*" (John 20:20a). When these disciples later said to Thomas: "*We have seen the Lord*" (v. 25a), he replied: "*Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe*" (v. 25b). Eight days later, Jesus appeared to His disciples again. This time Thomas was present. After His greeting, Jesus said to Thomas: "*Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless but believing*" (v. 27). When Jesus raised Himself from His grave, He did not raise a different body than the one that He had at His birth, at His death, and at His burial.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead took place **on a certain day**, the "*third day*" after His death and burial. This was a predetermined

day; therefore it could not have been any other day. When the women, on the third day after His burial (as the Jews reckoned time), came to Jesus' tomb, found the stone rolled away and the body of Jesus absent, two angels appeared to them and said: "*Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen. Remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and **the third day rise again.**' And they remembered His words*" (Luke 24:5b-8).

Jesus' resurrection definitely proves that **He is the Son of God**. No one but God could raise Himself from the grave. The Apostle Paul confirms this fact when he tells us that Jesus "*was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*" (Romans 1:4).

Now, how is **Christ's** resurrection the prototype, the model, the pattern, for **our** resurrection from the dead and the resurrection of all other human beings from the dead?

First of all, **our** bodies will **die** just as **His** body died. The difference between these two events is that our bodies will die **because of** our sins (Romans 5:12), while His body was sinless and died **for** "*our sins*" (I Corinthians 15:3), **to pay the full ransom to God for the sins of all** mankind (I Timothy 2:6; I John 2:2), giving us and all sinners in the world reconciliation with God (Romans 5:10a; II Corinthians 5:19; Luke 2:14). **In the past**, there have been only two human beings who have *not* died (even though by nature they were sinners like everyone else, Romans 3:22b-23), those two being Enoch (Genesis 5:24) and Elijah (II Kings 2:11). The only human beings **in the future** who will not die are those who will be living when our Savior visibly comes again to this earth, at His second advent, on the Last Day of this world (I Corinthians 15:51; I Thessalonians 4:15 and 17; Acts 1:11; Matthew 25:31; II Peter 3:10; Revelation 1:7).

Secondly, **our** bodies **will be raised** from the dead, as our God, in His Word, promised they will be, just **as Christ's body was raised** from the dead, as He, in His Word, promised that it would be made alive again. In John 5, Jesus Himself spoke these clear and unchanging words of truth: "*The hour is coming in the which **all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth***" (vv. 28-29a). As our title-text for this article says to us, "*But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the **first-fruits** of them that slept,*" so it is most

certainly true that Christ's resurrection from the dead is the **prototype**, the pattern, the model for our sure resurrection from the dead and the sure resurrection of all the dead in all the world. First Corinthians 15 also conveys to us this two-fold truth: "*As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*" (v. 22). This enormously instructive chapter, I Corinthians 15, also sets before us these striking words of truth regarding all true believers: "... **We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible**" (v. 52). Anyone who denies and rejects the bodily resurrection of all the dead on the last day is labeling Jesus and the Apostle Paul as liars and deceivers (I Corinthians 15:15–16), and is viewing "*the Scriptures*" as not worthy of anyone's trust and confidence (vv. 3–4). Such persons are "*wicked*" (II Peter 3:17) and pervert the Scriptures to "*their own destruction*" (II Peter 3:16b).

Thirdly, our resurrected bodies **will be the same bodies** in which we were born, the same bodies that we had during our years on this earth, and the same bodies that we had when we died and were buried. Job, one of the faithful Old Testament believers in the Savior (Job 1:8), declared: "*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the Latter Day upon the earth; and, though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold and not another, though my reins [my organs] be consumed within me*" (Job 19:25-27).

Fourthly, the resurrection of our bodies **will take place on a certain day** in the future, that day being the Last Day of this world (Cf. Job 19:25; John 5:28; I Corinthians 15:52; I Thessalonians 4:15–16), just as the resurrection of Christ's body took place on a certain day, that is, the "*third day*" after His death (John 2:19; Luke 24:7). The resurrection of our bodies and the resurrection of all other dead bodies will most certainly take place on that future day **known only to our God**. Jesus Himself confirms this truth when He conveys to us these changeless facts: "*But of that day [the last day of this world] and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only. ... Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. ... Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh*" (Matthew 24:36, 42, and 44).

Fifthly, the resurrection of **our bodies** from the dead will **definitely prove** that **Jesus is the Son of God**. Just as He raised His own body

from the dead, so Jesus, “*the mighty God*” (Isaiah 9:6b), will raise the bodies of all the dead on the Last Day. He Himself declared in John 5 that “*the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice [Jesus’ own voice] and shall come forth*” (vv.28-29a). Human beings cannot raise themselves from their graves, but with Jesus “*all things are possible*” (Matthew 19:26b); with Jesus “*nothing shall be impossible*” (Luke 1:37). Jesus (with the Father and the Holy Ghost) “*is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*” (Ephesians 3:20a). Let us not forget that, after Lazarus had been “*in the grave four days*” (John 11:17b), Jesus came; and, when the stone was rolled away from the entrance to the tomb where Lazarus had been buried, Jesus “*cried with a loud voice: ‘Lazarus, come forth’*” (v. 43). What happened after Jesus spoke these words? “*He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, ‘Loose him and let him go’*” (v. 44). Furthermore, Jesus showed His almighty power over death when He raised from the dead Jairus’ twelve-year old daughter, saying to her: “*Maid, arise*” (Luke 8:54b). What took place after the Savior said these words to the young girl? We are told that “*her spirit came again, and she arose straightway; and He commanded to give her meat*” (v. 55). These **miracles** in the lives of Lazarus, Jairus’ daughter, and still others are a preview of what Jesus, the mighty God, will do with all the dead on the Last Day; and they are recorded in the Scriptures for the very purpose “*that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name*” (John 20:31), the Name of Him who has given us everlasting victory over sin, death, and the grave (I Corinthians 15:55-57), and is therefore, in His own resurrection, the prototype, the pattern, the model of our own promised, future resurrection from the dead.

To all of His saints (I Corinthians 1:2; II Corinthians 1:1), to all of His dear sheep (John 10:27-28) and believing children (Galatians 3:26; I Corinthians 6:20a) who are still living in this world, Jesus gives this changeless, certain, and sure comfort: “*I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. ...Because I live, ye shall live also*” (John 14:2b-3, 19b). He is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

— R. J. L.



Chronology of the Risen Savior's Appearances

- Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James (“the less”) and of Joses; Salome, the wife of Zebedee; Joanna; and “*other women*” came to the sepulchre at the rising of the sun on Easter morning. (Matthew 28:1ff.; Mark 16:1ff.; Luke 24:1ff.)
- Seeing the tomb open, Mary Magdalene immediately left the group and returned to the city in panic. She found Peter and John and told them that someone had taken Jesus body from the grave. John, sprinting ahead of Peter, and Mary Magdalene bringing up the rear, headed back to the sepulchre to investigate. (John 20:1ff.)
- Meanwhile the other women had heard the angel’s message and, at his directions, began their return to Jerusalem. They apparently took a different road than that taken by Mary, Peter and John, because there is no indication that they encountered one another en route.)
- While the women were returning to Jerusalem, John and Peter, followed at some distance by Mary Magdalene, arrived at the sepulchre and investigated the empty tomb. Having examined the circumstantial evidence of the neatly-folded graveclothes, they returned home. (Luke 24:12; John 20:4-10)
- But Mary Magdalene, who had trailed along behind them, remained yet for a short time outside the sepulchre weeping. As she then peered into the tomb, she saw for the first time the angels (which apparently had not made themselves visible to Peter and John when *they* looked in). She still was of the mistaken opinion that Jesus’ body had been stolen. It was then that Jesus appeared to her personally —His first appearance on Easter morning. (John 20:11-18; Mark 16:9)
- Meanwhile, the other women were still proceeding on their way back to Jerusalem. Suddenly Jesus Himself appeared before them on the road —visibly, audibly, tangibly— to confirm to them the mission and message which the angel at the tomb had directed them to deliver to the disciples. (Matthew 28:9-10)
- On Easter afternoon, Jesus appeared to two disciples on their way to the village of Emmaus and engaged them in a protracted discussion about His suffering, death, and resurrection on the basis of Old Testa-

ment prophecy. After making Himself known, He vanished. (Luke 24:13ff.)

- Sometime between His resurrection and His appearance to the assembled disciples on Easter evening, the risen Christ also appeared to Simon Peter, a personal and apparently private appearance of which we know nothing except that it occurred and that the other disciples knew of it (Luke 24:34). St Paul mentions this appearance (“*He was seen of Cephas*”) also in his report (I Corinthians 15:5).

- On Easter afternoon, Jesus appeared to two disciples on their way to the village of Emmaus and engaged them in a protracted discussion about His suffering, death, and resurrection on the basis of Old Testament prophecy. After making Himself known, He vanished. (Luke 24:13ff.)

- On Easter evening (and also one week later), Jesus passed thru locked doors and appeared to the assembled disciples as a group, ate before them on the *first* visit, and permitted Thomas to touch Him and examine His wounds on the *second* visit (John 20:19ff.; Luke 24:36ff.).

- Other post-Easter appearances then followed during the 40 days before His ascension into heaven: To the seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee, where the risen Savior also restored Peter to his apostleship (John 21); to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus issued to them their “marching orders” in His *Great Commission* to “*make disciples of all nations*” (Matthew 28:16-20); to “*above five hundred brethren at once,*” of whom the majority were still alive at the apostle’s writing to testify as to what they saw (I Corinthians 15:6); to James, concerning which appearance we have no further details (I Corinthians 15:7); to the eleven at His ascension into heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:2-9).

- Later, after His ascension, the risen Christ appeared also to Paul, who saw Him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) just as surely as did those “*who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead*” (Acts 10:41). This is further evidence of the Savior’s personal union and the communication of attributes to His human nature also in His state of exaltation; for Paul reports his own eyewitness testimony right along with the eyewitness testimony of the others (I Corinthians 15:8).

—D. T. M.

“I Know that My Redeemer Lives!”

This popular Easter hymn, #200 in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941), was written by Samuel Medley (1738–1799) and first appeared in George Whitefield’s *Psalms and Hymns* in the year 1775. Medley apparently spent the first twenty-some years of his life like the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11ff.) in riotous living and blasphemous unbelief. But, while recovering from serious wounds suffered in battle during a tour of duty in the British navy, he lived at the home of his grandfather, who prayed for his conversion and read to him a sermon by Isaac Watts. According to several published sources, it was thus that Medley was brought to “*the knowledge of the truth*” (I Timothy 2:4b) and converted to faith in Christ Jesus as his Savior. He joined a Baptist church in London and, at the urging of his pastor, studied for the ministry. In 1767 he accepted a call to the pastorate of a small church at Watford and soon thereafter became the pastor of a congregation in Liverpool, where he served with apparent success until his death in 1799.

The hymn’s title is a paraphrase of Job’s initial statement in his prophecy of the Savior’s resurrection and in his bold confession of faith in his own resurrection on the Last Day, as we find this in Job 19:25–27, “***I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself; and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.***” The first two stanzas of the hymn express primarily the comfort of the Easter angel(s) in Matthew 27:5–7, Mark 16:6–7, and Luke 24:5–7 and of the purpose of Jesus’ ascension and exaltation to the right hand of God as stated in Ephesians chapter 4:

“I know that my Redeemer lives!
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives! He lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my ever-living Head!

“He lives triumphant from the grave!
He lives eternally to save!
He lives all-glorious in the sky;
He lives exalted there on high!”

The next five stanzas summarize the Savior's blessed ministration and gracious rule of His Church on earth in His *state of exaltation* according to His three-fold office: As our **Divine Prophet**, Christ continues to reveal Himself in the Gospel as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, and this very specifically in the *proclamation* of the Gospel through the Pastoral Office. As our **Divine Priest**, He imparts by means of the Sacraments and the Office of the Keys the satisfaction of God's justice by His vicarious atonement; and, on the basis of His propitiation, He intercedes for us before the throne of God. And as our **Divine King**, He graciously rules over His Church on earth with His Word and mightily protects His saints against all of their enemies both temporal and spiritual. In running through those stanzas, we shall cite only one (or perhaps two) passages from which Medley's statements might well have been derived, as the poet rejoices not only in the *fact* of Christ's resurrection but also in the *fruits* of His resurrection as He "lives and reigns to all eternity" (Luther) as the Savior and Head of His Church.

We note that Medley does not refer to the various facets of our risen Savior's care for His Church in any particular order but merely lets them flow freely from stanza to stanza in a poetic *recitation* of what great things He has done and continues to do for our salvation. While we could enlarge upon Medley's words with extended commentary based on the texts cited, we prefer — not only for the sake of brevity but also to allow his stanzas to move along as we are used to singing them — only to cite familiar texts of Scripture for the reader to look up as the *authority* for the poet's enumeration of the great blessings we enjoy day by day as Christians in the loving care of our resurrected, exalted, and ever-living Redeemer and Head.

“He lives to bless me with His love (Romans 8:35–39);
He lives to plead for me above (Romans 8:34; I John 2:1; I Timothy 2:5);
He lives my hungry soul to feed (John 6:35, 51; I Peter 2:2–3);
He lives to help in time of need (Hebrews 2:18; 4:14–16).

“He lives to grant me rich supply (Romans 8:31);
He lives to guide me with His eye (I Peter 3:12);
He lives to comfort me when faint (Matthew 11:28–29);
He lives to hear my soul's complaint (John 16:24).

“He lives to silence all my fears (Luke 12:32);
He lives to wipe away my tears (John 16:20);
He lives to calm my troubled heart (John 14:27);
He lives all blessings to impart (John 14:13–14).

“He lives, my kind, wise, heavenly Friend (John 15:15);
He lives and loves me to the end (Matthew 28:20b);
He lives, and while He lives I’ll sing (Romans 15:9);
He lives, My Prophet, Priest and King (Deuteronomy 18:15;
Hebrews 7:26–27; II Timothy 4:18).

“He lives and grants me daily breath (Acts 17:25);
He lives, and I shall conquer death (I Corinthians 15:55–57);
He lives my mansion to prepare (John 14:2);
He live to bring me safely there (John 14:3).”

No wonder this hymn is a favorite, not only at Easter time when we specially commemorate the resurrection of our Savior, not only at the funeral of a believer when the confession of the risen Christ is of such great importance and comfort to us, but throughout our lives as we endure day after day “*the sufferings of this present time*” (Romans 8:18a) and confidently look to our “ever-living Head” for help, for comfort, for sustenance, for strength, for endurance, and for the sure and certain expectation of “*the glory that shall be revealed in us*” (v. 18b) by His grace!

As we therefore celebrate the mighty resurrection of our Savior on Easter morning, we focus not only upon the *indisputable facts* which, taken together, form a body of evidence that, on its face, would stand up in any court of objective inquiry as supporting both Jesus’ death and resurrection; but we rejoice particularly in the *importance and comfort* that His resurrection provides to us Christians for our faith (I Corinthians 15:17a), for the surety of our justification (I Corinthians 15:17b), and for our hope (I Corinthians 15:18 and 20). For, as we are reminded in summary by Question and Answer #152 in our *Catechism* (CPH, 1943 Ed.), our Savior’s resurrection definitely proves **a**) that He is the very Son of God, **b**) that His Word is absolutely true and reliable, **c**) that God the Father accepted His sacrifice as payment-in-full for the reconciliation of the world, and **d**) that on the Last Day all believers will rise to eternal life.

However, we also take note, as does the writer of the hymn before us, of unspeakably great blessings, both temporal and spiritual, that are ours as the result of Jesus' resurrection — blessings to true believers that preceded His resurrection *in time* (as the Psalmist enumerates them in Psalm 103) and blessings that continue to come to us by virtue of it. This risen Savior is, after all, our exalted Prophet, Priest and King, whom the Father “gave...to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 1:22–23). This is the very Lord of whom the Psalmist sings in Psalm 103 these familiar words not only about His divine providence of all His creatures but particularly about His special care of His believing children: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (vv. 2–5; cf. Isaiah 40:28–31). It is these blessings and others which the hymnwriter enumerates in stanzas 3 through 7 for our Easter comfort and assurance as we journey through this vale of tears with our eyes of faith focused on “Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2). “To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen!” (II Peter 3:18b).

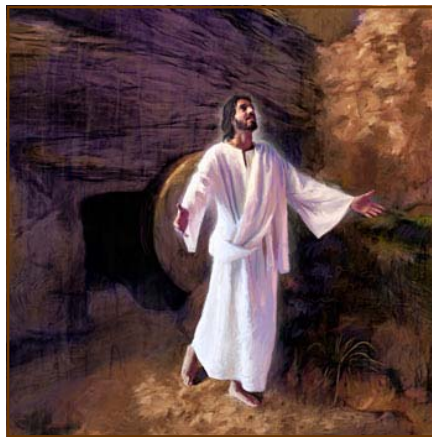
“He lives, all glory to His name! (Philippians 2:9–11);

He lives, my Jesus, still the same (Hebrews 13:8).

Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives:

‘I know that my Redeemer lives!’ (Job 19:25).”

— D. T. M.



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Annual Convention**

of the

Concordia Lutheran Conference

June 22nd, 23rd and 24th, 2012

at

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Seattle, Washington

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with the

Plenary Pastoral Conference

on June 19th and 20th

and the

Board of Directors Meeting on June 21st

Convention Motto:

Christ, Our Divine Prophet

John 1:17-18

The Friday Keynote Sermon is on **Malachi 3:1**
The Sunday Convention Sermon is on **John 1:17-18**

Convention Essay in Two Parts:

Part I. "The Angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament
Part II. "The Messenger of the Covenant" in the New Testament