

*The*  
*Concordia*  *Lutheran*

"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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**“Declared to be the  
Son of God with  
power... by the  
resurrection from  
the dead”**

**Romans 1:4**

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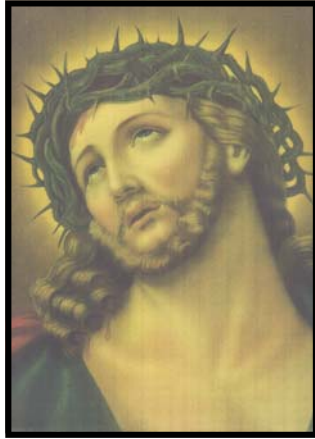
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## ***“Behold the Man”*** **...Crucified for YOU!**

(Lenten sermon delivered in  
Oak Forest on March 20, 2013  
by Seminarian Jason A. Mabe)

Text: **Mark 15:22-32**

In the Name of Jesus Christ, the Suffering Substitute for poor sinners, dearly beloved fellow watchers with Him in His bitter passion:

In our mid-week Lenten meditations, we have had the privilege to “*Behold the Man,*” Jesus, our Savior, suffering in our stead and for our sakes. We beheld how He was *in agony for us* during His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane as He suffered the agony of a guilty conscience weighed down by the world’s sins, also our sins, laid to His charge by His heavenly Father. We beheld Him *betrayed for us* into the hands of the chief priests by Judas and thus subjected to the worst kind of treachery; and we witnessed Him subsequently arrested, taken prisoner for what we have done. We beheld Him suffering the *denial* by Peter, who arrogantly boasted that he would neither be offended because of Him nor deny Him in any wise – the very denial we make of Him when we, according to our sinful flesh, refuse to acknowledge Him. We beheld Him *accused* of blasphemy, acts of sedition, and treason, crimes of which we are truly guilty before God by commission or omission. We beheld Him *abused*, scourged and smote maliciously by Roman soldiers *for us*, the very ones who by our sins caused that mistreatment. And now this evening in our sixth meditation, we look to the text before us and behold Him yet again, this time on the way to the cross. Come with me then and “*Behold the Man*” crucified for you!

The description of Christ’s crucifixion that Mark gives us in our text is very brief: “*They crucified Him*” (v. 25). More words to describe this process were not necessary for Mark’s readers since crucifixion was commonplace and was well-understood by the people at the time. Secular historians describe crucifixion as an excruciating way to die since, as

an instrument of torture, it was designed to last all day and even several days, even though many victims did not die as a direct result of it but had to be beaten to death to finish them off! In the process of a crucifixion, a cross of timbers was first placed on the ground; and then the victim was stretched out against the wood to the extremities of the cross bar. With the victim's hands placed out to each side, heavy iron nails were then driven through his hands and also through his feet into the wood to fasten him to the cross. The victim was now regarded to be "*crucified*" (vv. 24–25), or affixed to a cross. When, as Mark records in our text, Jesus was in this same manner "*crucified*," the Old Testament prophecy of the Savior's words recorded by David in Psalm 22 was fulfilled; for "*they pierced My hands and My feet*" (v. 16c). Throughout this entire process, Jesus suffered traumatically. Just try to imagine yourself in this unbearable situation – huge spikes driven through your hands and your feet, suffering not only the trauma of being nailed to the cross, but also by having your shoulders overly extended and disjointed and your rib cage so lifted up that you can hardly breathe, hanging in this torturous condition for hours!

This horrible process of crucifixion, being a form of sadistic torture, was so cruel and degrading that it was not considered appropriate for Roman citizens. The Jews, however, were not Roman citizens but colonists, no better than slaves under Roman law. Certainly Jesus was not regarded by the Romans as what at least some of the Pharisees recognized Him to be, namely, "*a teacher come from God*" (John 3:2). Rather, He was in His own words in Psalm 22, "*a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people*" (v. 6). Jesus had been up all night without sleep, having been dragged by the Jews from one court to another, in trials which were illegal under Jewish law because they were held at night, trials in which Jesus was falsely accused, slapped and mocked. Early the next morning at six o'clock, He had been taken to Pilate who, having yielded to the political pressure of the Jews, finally sentenced Him to death even though he had declared Jesus to be innocent! Jesus, having been scourged, smacked around, and spat upon, carried His cross until He could not bear it any longer; and then Simon of Cyrene was compelled to finish carrying it to the place of execution.

Now, as our text reads, "*They bring Him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, 'The place of a skull'*" (v. 22), the common place of execution outside the city walls of Jerusalem. We learn here that the time of this event was "*the third hour*" (v. 25a) of the day, nine o'clock in the morning as the Jews reckoned time. It was then that

“they crucified Him” (v. 25b). When we behold what Jesus was going through, we can better understand what He suffered for our sake — innocent though He was in His person and yet suffering intensely as the vilest criminal in our stead.

In verse 23 of our text, we see that “*wine mingled with myrrh*” was offered to Jesus just before His crucifixion, but that He “*received it not*.” This wine, into which a narcotic, an anesthetic drug, was mixed, was customarily given to criminals prior to their crucifixion to reduce the immediate pain — not for the purpose of showing mercy toward the condemned — but so that the victim did not die prematurely of cardiac arrest and thus escape the intended torture. Jesus, however, refused such a drink, choosing instead to experience, with His senses unimpaired, the full extent of the agony for and in the stead of all mankind, for us, for you. He did not shrink back from the cup of suffering which His Father had given Him to drink (cf. Matthew 26:42) because it was necessary for Him, “*who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree*” (I Peter 2:24), Peter writes in his first epistle, to go through all of this pain for us in order to redeem us and all the world from our sins.

Jesus was crucified, He was subjected to this cruel form of capital punishment, in order to expiate, that is, fully pay for and remove from before God the guilt and sins of all mankind. We learn from our text that “*He was numbered with the transgressors*” (v. 28); and in this way “*the Scripture was fulfilled*,” namely, the Old Testament prophecy recorded in Isaiah chapter 53, verse 12. Jesus was “*numbered*,” that is, counted “*with the transgressors*” — not merely because He was crucified between “*two thieves, the one on His right hand and the other on His left*” (v. 27) — but because He was numbered as a transgressor and on behalf of transgressors as the vicarious Redeemer of all sinful mankind. Jesus had assumed the sins of the world, that is, for every soul of man, by way of imputation or reckoning; for God had “*made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us*,” St. Paul explains in II Corinthians 5:21; and “*the Lord ha[d] laid on Him the iniquity of us all*” (Isaiah 53:6). In this manner, my fellow watchers, God imputed or charged to the innocent Christ the sins of all mankind and meted out His full wrath on Christ instead of on us, so that Jesus suffered the guilt and suffered the punishment of the world’s transgressions; for “*Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust*” (I Peter 3:18). Thus, “*in Christ*,” God removed the cause of His righteous anger toward sinful mankind — “*the sin of the world*” (cf. John 1:29), thereby “*reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*” (II Corinthians 5:19).

Moreover, in connection with His crucifixion, Jesus was to fulfill all the Old Testament prophecies concerning the suffering of the Messiah. We read for example in our text that “*when they had crucified Him, they parted His garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take*” (v. 24). This seemingly insignificant detail had been foretold long ago by David in the 22nd Psalm, verse 18, where the Messiah Himself speaks and says, “*They part My garments among them and cast lots upon My vesture.*” Jesus’ ordinary clothes were simply divided up among the soldiers; but John in his Gospel account tells us that “*His coat,*” which “*was without seam, woven from the top throughout,*” was neither torn up nor divided but was awarded by the casting of lots (John 19:23–24), by “the roll of the dice,” as we would say today.

Furthermore, Jesus was taunted by the soldiers, blasphemed by the people, and mocked by onlookers while He was suffering on the cross — in fulfillment of another prophecy from the mouth of the Messiah Himself in Psalm 22, where we read, “*All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn. They shoot out the lip; they shake the head, saying, ‘He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him. Let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him’*” (vv. 7–8). We read in our text how precisely this prophecy was fulfilled: “*They that passed by railed on Him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘Ah, Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself and come down from the cross!’*” (v. 29–30). Also the chief priests and scribes dared Jesus to make them believe by means of a miracle. We read further, “*Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross that we may see and believe’*” (v. 31–32a). Even the two thieves, “*they that were crucified with Him,*” also “*reviled Him*” (v. 32b).

Was Jesus “[*the*] *Christ, the King of Israel,*” as He had claimed to be before Pilate, as we learned two weeks ago during our 4th Midweek Lenten service? Indeed He was! Was “*the superscription of His accusation*” that Pilate had “*written*” and posted on His cross — the inscription, “*The King of the Jews*” (v. 26) — was that really true? Indeed it was! We learn from the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah in his 23rd chapter, verses 5 and 6, that the Messiah was foretold to be “*a King...called the Lord, our Righteousness,*” and from the Old Testament prophet Micah in his 5th chapter, verse 2, that the Messiah was “*to be Ruler in Israel.*” Jesus was indeed “*the King of the Jews*” (v. 26); but these mockers, these scorners, were not truly interested in the

Messiah's spiritual kingdom. Yet we see that Christ "*died for all*" (II Corinthians 5:15), even for these blasphemers, yea, for all of us. From this cross of shame, Jesus, afflicted by imputation of our guilt, would not "*come down*" because He was determined to suffer and die for the redemption of the world. It was God's will from eternity already that Jesus be crucified in time. We learn in Hebrews in chapter 10 that the One who had "*come into the world*" (v. 5) saying, '*Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God*'" (vv. 7, 9), was "*delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,*" to be "*taken and by wicked hands... crucified*" (Acts 2:23). "*Behold the Man*" crucified for you!

Why is it that this "*Man,*" whom we "*behold*" here in our text, was crucified for us? It was out of love for fallen mankind (John 3:16; I John 4:9–10) that, "*when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son,*" His Christ, "*made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law*" (Galatians 4:4–5) by suffering crucifixion in the stead and for the benefit of all mankind. As we noted before, Jesus suffered the imputed guilt of the wretched world; and He suffered the "*wages of sin*" (Romans 6:23a), "*being made a curse*" on the tree of His cross for you and for me; "*for it is written, 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree'*" (Galatians 3:13b). In our place, He willingly endured being crucified to propitiate, that is, to satisfy fully and perfectly, God's just requirements of His holy Law as the complete sacrifice "*for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world*" (I John 2:2). "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29).

We see in the crucifixion of our Savior God's eternal plan to save the world through His Son (cf. John 3:17), through His Christ, "*who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world*" (I Peter 1:20) to be its Redeemer (v. 18). Peter continues in his first epistle to explain how then in time Christ "*was manifest[ed]...for you*" (I Peter 1:20). We have in the precious Gospel the knowledge of what God has done "*in Christ,*" that is, on the basis of Christ's perfect propitiation to remove from before Himself the offenses of all mankind (II Corinthians 5:19), to forgive all the sins of the world (John 1:29), and to count Christ's righteousness as covering the world's unrighteousness (Romans 5:18), thus reconciling also you unto Himself "*when [you] were [His] enem[y]*" (Romans 5:10a), when you were "*[a child] of wrath, even as others*" (Ephesians 2:3). Knowing of this wonderful reconciliation and moved by the power of this Gospel as the Means of the Holy Ghost, "*behold*" this Christ, "*the Man*" crucified for you, that

by trusting in Him, you, as “[a child] of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26), have personally, as your own possession, the blessedness of His perfect righteousness imputed to you **and** the “redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of [your] sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7) — all the unspeakably great benefits that your Savior has accomplished for you by His holy life in your stead and by His perfect suffering on the accursed tree of His cross in your place!

Let us therefore turn our eyes not away from this gruesome suffering but toward His wondrous cross, clinging in childlike confidence to our crucified Redeemer and singing to Him,

*Thou knowest all my griefs and fears,  
Thy grace abused, my misspent years;  
yet now to Thee with contrite tears,  
Christ Crucified, I come.*

*Wash me and take away each stain;  
let nothing of my sin remain.  
For cleansing, though it be through pain —  
[the pain which Thou didst endure for me],  
Christ Crucified, I come!*

(TLH 390, vv. 2 and 3, adapted)

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us and grant us Thy peace. Amen.





# The Old Testament Passover and Christ, OUR Passover

*“Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us.” — I Corinthians 5:7b*

As Jesus and His disciples were returning to Judea from the province of Perea “*beyond Jordan*” (Matthew 19:1) and had come as far as Jericho, the Savior specially took them aside from the multitudes and explained to them in detail what lay ahead for Him in the city of Jerusalem. The sacred prophecies concerning His suffering and death were about to be fulfilled, Jesus told them; and His vicarious atonement for the sins of the world would soon be accomplished. We find this poignant and detailed description in the Gospel accounts of Matthew (20:17-19), Mark (10:32-34), and Luke (18:31-34). We also know, particularly from Luke’s account (v. 34), that the disciples did not truly understand and appreciate this advance notice of what was to come, even though they had been well aware for some time of the hatred of the Jewish leaders for Jesus and of their on-going plot against Him (John 5:16 and 18; 11:8). But then neither did the real significance of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem dawn on them until much later (John 12:16). Indeed the shouts of “*Hosanna!*” and the words “*Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!*” from the last part of the *Hallel* [hah • LAYL], the song of praise from Psalm 118 that was sung at the butchering of the Paschal lamb and in the eating of the Passover meal, were prophetic in and of themselves; for the “*Lamb of God*” (John 1:29) was about to be offered, of which the Old Testament sacrifice was only a type. And Jesus’ words, though their true meaning had been “*hid from them*” (Luke 18:34), cast a pall of impending tragedy upon the mood of the disciples as they looked forward to the otherwise festive Passover observance just ahead.

On the first day of the “Feast of Unleavened Bread,” as the Passover festival was also called (Exodus 12:17, Matthew 26:17, etc.), the 14th day of the month of Nisan, Jesus sent Peter and John into Jerusalem to make preparations for the Passover meal, which He intended to celebrate one last time with His disciples. The Lord, according to His divine omniscience and providence, had already seen to it that a suitable

location would be available, “*the guestchamber*” in a certain house, which was “*a large upper room, furnished and prepared*” (Mark 14:12-16) for the purpose. The furnishings no doubt included the traditional Passover table surrounded by low couches on which dinner guests traditionally reclined, all the necessary dishes for the setting of the table, and perhaps even the staple foods that were to be served (with the exception of the Passover lamb itself); and the room had been “*prepared*” in advance of their arrival, with the search for and removal of any stray “*leaven*” or leavened bread (Exodus 12:19) already having been completed, presumably by the host, the night before or at least by noon on the 14th. The two disciples then had to fight the crowds in and around the Temple to procure a properly selected and Levitically inspected lamb that met the requirements of the Lord in Exodus 12:3-5, and they had to slaughter this lamb publicly in the Temple early “*in the evening*” (v. 6), aided by the priests, who caught the blood in basins and deposited it on the great Altar of Burnt Offerings. During the on-going slaughter of hundreds and even thousands of such lambs, the “*Hallel*” was sung by the Levites, with certain lines repeated by the worshipers as a kind of refrain. After the lamb had been dressed and cleansed, and the inedible parts had been removed to the altar for burning, Peter and John brought the carcass down from the Temple Mount to the house where Jesus and the rest of the disciples met them later that evening. There the lamb was roasted according to the Lord’s regulation in Exodus 12, and the table was spread also with the other specified ingredients of the supper: Unleavened loaves (flat “boards”) of bread [*mazOTH*], signifying the haste with which the Children of Israel left Egypt in the Exodus; bitter herbs [*mahROHR*] reminiscent of the bitter bondage they served under Pharaoh; and a sauce of finely-chopped apples, raisins, nuts and cinnamon [*chaROseth*] symbolizing the mortar used in the building of Pharaoh’s cities. There was also a ceremonial wine goblet on the table which was filled and passed around on three specific occasions during the service [*seder*], or there were three separate cups serving the same purpose without one having to be refilled. (A fourth cup seems to have been added somewhat later in the history of the Passover *seder*.) Grape wine was used, made from “*the fruit of the vine*” (Luke 22:18); and it was commonly mixed two-to-one with water.

The purpose of *the first* Passover was indeed salutary, in that the blood of the Paschal lamb painted upon the doorposts of their houses saved the Children of Israel from the angel of death in the Tenth Plague upon

Egypt. It was the God-appointed seal of His gracious protection toward them, with His own promise of deliverance attached to it. And the benefit was received by *faith*, by confidence in the surety of God's promise, which faith the people *showed* by displaying the blood on their houses. And the *perpetuation* of that festival was ordained by the Lord Himself through Moses in Exodus 12:14, namely, that "*this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations*" —not merely for the purpose of "remembering" a historical occurrence, but for the purpose of "telling" (*Haggadah*) or proclaiming the grace of God sealed to Israel in that great deliverance and of remaining in the grace of God by faith in His mercy.

The sacrifice of the Paschal lamb was also (and primarily) "*a shadow of things to come, ...the body [being] of Christ*" (Colossians 2:17). The Old Testament Scriptures are full of images which refer to the sacrificial lambs offered by God's people as **types** or **pictures** of "*the Lamb of God*" (John 1:29), whose holy, precious blood, "painted," as it were, on the doorposts of the believer's heart, saves him from the angel of **eternal death** (Hebrews 2:14; Romans 5:8-9), "*for even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for US*" (1 Corinthians 5:7). The inseparable connection between the Paschal lambs of the Old Testament and Christ, the "*Passover*" of the New Testament, is established beyond any doubt, not only by that statement of the Apostle Paul "*in the words...which the Holy Ghost teacheth*" (1 Corinthians 2:13), but even by the description of the lamb to be used in the Passover, a lamb "*...without blemish, a male of the first year, ...neither shall ye break a bone thereof*" (Exodus 12:5 and 46) and the revelation of its **antitype** by the Apostle Peter (1 Peter 1:18-19): "*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who by Him do believe in God.*"

Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ, in perfect obedience to the Law for our sakes (Romans 5:19, etc.) celebrated the Old Testament Passover **for the last time** "*the same night in which He was betrayed*" because that **symbolic** imagery was now to give way to the **true**, and there would no longer be any need for "*a shadow of things to come*" since "*the body is of Christ,*" God's *Messiah*, the Anointed One, "*whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in HIS blood*" (Romans 3:25).

On the Passover table had been three loaves or sheets of unleavened bread at the outset. The sheet in the center had been divided in half, according to the Passover liturgy; and half had been *set aside* as a kind of dessert or “after-dish” [*Aphikomen*] to be eaten at the *end* of the meal, after which nothing else was to be eaten. The rest of the bread was consumed *during* the meal itself. Having “*fulfilled the Law*” by completing the Passover meal as it had been instituted, the Lord Jesus “*took bread*” —presumably of the *Aphikomen* left over from the Paschal supper— “*and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying: ‘This is My body which is given **for you**. This do in remembrance of Me.*” Note that the roasted meat which they had consumed before had not been “symbolic” of a lamb’s body; it was of a lamb’s *true* body. Likewise Jesus gave to His disciples not bread “symbolic” of HIS body, but bread which He Himself said “*IS My body.*” [The ridiculous claim that Jesus did not use the word “*is*” in the Aramaic of the Hebrew language—which He no doubt spoke in the presence of His disciples—is of **no consequence** to us, since the Greek word “*is*” constitutes an undisputed part of the text and, as the word which the Holy Ghost Himself gave to the writers, it indicates not only what Jesus *meant*, but what He *said*, even though the word in Aramaic is only “understood.”] “*This do,*” as the replacement of the *old* ordinance, “*in remembrance,*” not of the Paschal lamb of the Exodus from physical bondage to Pharaoh, but “*of ME,*” the Paschal **Lamb of fulfillment**, who “*through death ...destroy[ed] him that had the power of death, that is, the devil [the angel of eternal death], and deliver[ed] them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to [spiritual] bondage*” (Hebrews 2:14-15).

“*Likewise He took also the cup after supper*” (Luke 22:20) —after He had fulfilled the ordinance of the Passover supper— the **third** cup on the table, the *Kiddush* [kid • DOOSH] cup or “*cup of blessing*” as St. Paul calls it (I Corinthians 10:16), over which the final “*blessing*” or thanksgiving of the Passover meal was offered, “*saying: ‘This cup is the **new testament**’* —the testament or covenant of **fulfillment** rather than of prophecy— “*in My blood,*” the blood of Christ, who “*offered Himself without spot to God*” (Hebrews 9:14), the blood “*which is shed for you,*” and Matthew adds, “*for the remission of sins*” the blood of Him “*whom God hath set forth to be a **propitiation** through faith in **HIS blood***” (Romans 3:25). “*This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me*” (I Corinthians 11:25), not in remembrance of a lamb, or a symbol, or a token, or a gesture, but in proclamation of “*the Lord’s death, till He come*” (v. 26). Thus we confess with Luther con-

cerning this blessed Sacrament of the Altar: **“It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.”**

Still then to celebrate the *Passover* of the *Old* Testament, as if the *New* Testament of fulfillment had not replaced it, as if the blood of animal sacrifices still pointed ahead to that which had not yet been accomplished, as if “*the blood of bulls and of goats,*” yea, as if the blood of a Paschal lamb were of any significance whatsoever for our deliverance from slavery to sin, from bondage to Satan, and from the fear of death into the “*promised land*” of heaven, would be to **desecrate** the “*one offering*” whereby Christ “*perfected forever them that are sanctified*” (Hebrews 10:14).

Nay rather, let us rejoice in the victorious cry of “*Christ, our Passover...sacrificed for us,*” the declaration of the Lamb of God from His cross of agony: “*It is finished!*” or, more precisely from the Greek of the text for our enduring comfort and assurance: “*It stands accomplished!*” For with the flawless prophetic perspective afforded by God’s Holy Spirit, Isaiah saw it, as if it had already occurred—still in the time of the Old Covenant—the “*Lamb without blemish and without spot*” (I Peter 1:19) having vicariously suffered in **our place** the wages of sin and having laid His all-sufficient atonement before God as payment-in-full for **our** transgressions: “*Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed... For He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was He stricken. ...He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth; yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief... He shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities*” (Isaiah 53). No wonder the Lord Jesus Himself revealed to His servant, John, in a prophetic vision the joyful song of praise that even the angels of heaven shall sing to the Lamb of God, even though they, as sinless beings, have no personal need of His atoning sacrifice: “*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!*” (Revelation 5 12).

Indeed what a priceless boon we have in the **Holy Supper** of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Supper of Fulfillment! For in, with, and under the

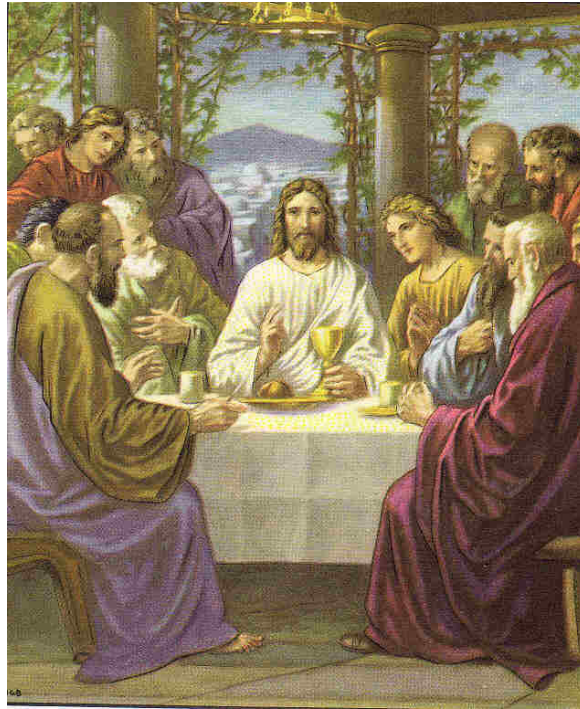
bread *still present* in that Holy Sacrament, Christ gives us in a supernatural manner His **true body** *to eat* with our very mouths; and in, with, and under the wine *still present* in the Sacrament, He gives us *to drink* of His **true** blood —not as mere symbols of the sacrifice He laid down at the bar of divine justice in our place, but **the very body slain** and **the very blood shed** for US “*for the remission of sins!*”

*Here the **true** Paschal Lamb we see,  
whom God so freely gave **us!**  
He died on the accursed tree —  
so strong His love! — to save **us!**  
See, His blood doth mark **our** door!  
Faith points to it, death passes o'er,  
and Satan cannot harm **us!**  
Hallelujah!*

(Martin Luther in *TLH*, 195, 3)

—D. T. M.

(Reprinted from the March-April issue, 2000)



## “I Believe in... the Resurrection of the Body”

*“Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection, and the Life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?”*

—John 11:25–26

In His words to Martha, the grieving sister of the then dead Lazarus, Jesus declared Himself to be “*the Resurrection and the Life*” for all who confide in Him, and thereby not only comforted Martha’s sad heart but also gave true comfort in the face of death to Christians of all time. Everlasting life is here promised to all those who have been brought to saving faith in Christ—whether they have already fallen asleep in the Savior (“*he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live*”), or are currently still alive here on earth (“*whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die*”). After thus proclaiming life everlasting and victory over death for all who trust in Him, Jesus asked Martha the following question: “*Believest thou this?*” Of course, Jesus already knew that Martha believed this, but He was prompting her to confess her faith with her mouth; and she did so very nicely with the reply: “*Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world*” (v. 27). Three verses before this, Martha also confessed her faith in the resurrection, saying: “*I know that he [her dead brother, Lazarus] shall rise again in the resurrection at the Last Day*” (v. 24).

Now you and I may also take the very same question of the Lord Jesus as if it were directed to each one of us individually, namely, “*Believest thou this [the promise of eternal life through faith in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life]?*” Like Martha, we Christians *do* believe in a glorious resurrection unto life everlasting through our Savior Jesus Christ, and should likewise also confess it. To deny the resurrection of the dead would naturally lead to a denial of *Christ’s* resurrection, which is a fundamental doctrine of the saving Christian faith! The Apostle Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians: “*If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God because we have testified of God that He*

*raised up Christ, whom He raised not up if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (15:13–19).*

Not surprisingly, worldly-wise unbelievers typically regard faith in the resurrection of the dead to be completely irrational, since all their observations in the world lead them to the conclusion that death is final and irreversible. What may seem surprising, however, is that the “modernists” of our day and time, people who call themselves “Christians,” including even some “Lutherans,” also deny the physical resurrection of the dead in spite of the many passages of Scripture in which the resurrection is clearly taught. Like the modern rationalists of today, the Sadducees of Jesus’ day also denied that the dead will be raised and sought to make the Savior look foolish when He defended this doctrine. However, they only succeeded in revealing their own spiritual ignorance, as the Lord declared to them: “*Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God*” (Matthew 22:23–32). Indeed, those two points of ignorance (regarding the Scriptures and regarding God’s power) account for the incorrect reasoning of all who deny the resurrection of the dead. It is impossible to know and believe what the Scriptures say of the resurrection while still being of the opinion that the dead will not be raised. Likewise, it is impossible to believe in an all-powerful God while also maintaining that raising the dead is beyond His ability.

Because the Bible plainly teaches that all the dead will be raised up on the Last Day (John 5:28–29), everyone who claims to respect the teachings of the Bible should certainly also believe, teach, and confess without shame or reservation that the dead will rise. And because our God is *omnipotent* (all-powerful), there should be absolutely no doubt at all that He can bring a dead and decayed body back to life from the dust and ashes (Luke 1:37), just as it was not beyond His power to create the living body of Adam out of the dust of the ground in the beginning (Genesis 2:7). It does not matter in the least that human science and medicine are unable to restore life to a dead and decayed body; nor does it matter that none of us have ever observed people coming back to life after they have long been dead. We Christians believe in the resurrection of the dead, not because we have seen it happen before, but because our faithful God has told us that it *will* happen on the Last Day (I Corinthians 15:51–52). Likewise, we know that the dead will be raised,



not because we believe that advances in science and medicine will one day make this possible for man to accomplish, but because “*with God all things are possible*” (Matthew 19:26).

“*Believest thou this?*” Most certainly, because the omnipotent Lord God has said so! Thus our faith in the resurrection is not without basis, nor is it mere wishful thinking; but it has the most sure and solid foundation that there can possibly be—the infallible Word of the Lord! Consequently, we Christians have no need of “scientific evidence” or tangible, visible proof of the resurrection in order to believe in it; for as the Scriptures declare: “*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (Hebrews 11:1). But why is the clear testimony of Holy Scripture fully sufficient for *us* to believe in the resurrection of the dead, when the *unbelievers* scoff at the Bible and reject it as being no evidence at all? This is because despisal of the Lord goes hand in hand with despisal of His Word, whereas those who are the beloved children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26) accept and treasure the Word of their Lord and Savior. Accordingly, Jesus told the unbelieving Jews: “*He that is of God heareth God’s Words; ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God*” (John 8:47). Of course, we are only “*of God*” and *hear His Words* because the Holy Ghost has worked saving faith in our hearts (I Corinthians 12:3) through the power of the Gospel (Romans 1:16; 10:14, 17); so our gracious God and Lord gets all the credit, glory, and thanks for bringing us to faith in Christ Jesus and thereby also working in us confidence in the resurrection of the dead.

When Jesus told Martha, “*Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die,*” He was *not* promising Christians that they will never meet temporal death—the death of their bodies (the separation of the soul from the body). Rather, He who is “*the Resurrection and the Life*” promises all believers that they will have *eternal life in heaven* in spite of temporal death here on earth (“*though he were dead, yet shall he live*”). On account of our Savior’s work of redemption, life everlasting awaits us on the other side of the grave. Since in the resurrection of Christ we have the assurance of our forgiveness (Romans 4:25), we know that our souls will not be condemned to eternal destruction in hell but will be taken to heaven when we die, there to receive the promised fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore in the presence of the Lord (Psalm 16:11). It should be understood, however, that the resurrection of Christ not only assures us of salvation for our *souls*, but also for our *bodies*. On the Last Day, death will be completely undone since our bodies will be restored to

life and be reunited with our souls. By inspiration of the Holy Ghost, St. Paul foretells our victory over the grave, writing in his first epistle (letter) to the Corinthians, in chapter 15: “*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*” (vv. 53–57).

According to the Scriptures, our own resurrection on the Last Day has been foreshadowed by Christ’s resurrection from the tomb on Easter morning. Thus the Apostle Paul writes again in I Corinthians 15: “*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*” (vv. 20–22). If, therefore, we believe in Christ’s resurrection from the dead—which, certainly, we must if we are true Christians (I Corinthians 15:17)—then we should be equally certain that all of us will rise from the dead as well. The resurrection on the Last Day will include *all the dead*—believers and unbelievers alike (John 5:28–29). But only the resurrection of *Christians* will truly be patterned after Christ’s resurrection—our bodies being glorified like the glorious body of the resurrected Lord Jesus. Consequently, in joyous anticipation of our resurrection 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). “*Believest thou this?*” Of course we believe it, since our glorious resurrection is as certain as Christ’s own resurrection from the dead—“even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true” (Luther)! Our Savior has declared: “*Because I live, ye shall live also*” (John 14:9); and we should cling to this comforting promise throughout our lives and in the hour of death.

Whether we are young or old, death can befall any of us at any time. Unless the Lord Jesus returns first, all of us will experience temporal death. For some, this may seem like a depressing thing to think about; but it certainly need not be for us Christians. We have the Gospel-generated confidence that in Christ’s victory over death each one of us shares in that victory! Since, therefore, the grave has been conquered for us, and eternal bliss and glory (for both body and soul) await us in

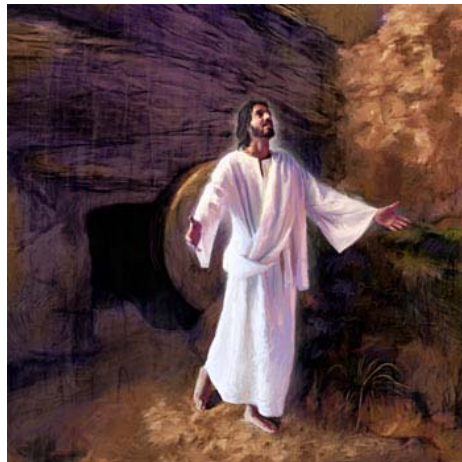
heaven, we can look forward to a blessed departure from this earthly life. Clinging to our resurrected Savior, who is “*the Resurrection and the Life*” for all those who trust in Him, every one of us may confidently declare in the words of Job: “*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand 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*” (Job 19:25–27).

Jesus lives! The victory's won!  
Death no longer can appal me!  
Jesus lives! Death's reign is done!  
From the grave Christ will recall me.  
Brighter scenes will then commence.  
This shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! and now is death  
but the gate of life immortal;  
This shall calm my trembling breath  
when I pass its gloomy portal.  
Faith shall cry, as fails each sense,  
“Jesus is my confidence!”

(*TLH* 201, vv. 1 & 5)

—P. E. B.



## Our Comfort and Assurance in the Message of the Easter Angel

*“And he saith unto them: ‘Be not affrighted. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee, as He said unto you.’”*  
—Mark 16:6-7

On Easter Sunday we Christians marked once again, as we do each and every year, the most **significant**, the most **essential**, the most **glorious**, and to be sure the most **comforting** festival on our church calendar: The Festival of the ***Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, from the Dead***. Indeed, the event we commemorate on Easter Day is **absolutely central** to our entire Christian faith, as central as the hub is to a wheel; for virtually every fundamental doctrine of Holy Scripture is inseparably linked to the *fact* of Christ’s resurrection — either pointing **to** it, stemming **from** it, or depending **upon** it! In fact, Jesus’ life here on earth, His entire public ministry, and His death on the cross for the sins of the world — all would be **for NOTHING** if He had not truly risen from His grave on Easter morning! For Jesus of Nazareth would have been the greatest fool, fraud, and “flim-flam” con-artist the world had ever seen, a liar and deceiver without equal in the annals of history! And WE, His disciples, would be fools as well to have fallen for His “line” and placed our confidence in Him!

The devil, of course, would have us and all men for that matter believe precisely that very thing about the Savior and His mighty resurrection; for Satan deeply **resents** that final and ultimate victory which Jesus won over him when He rose from the dead on the third day! And so the Foe’s **adherents** have, from that very moment, sought to discredit, disprove, and even poke fun at the resurrection account in hopes of destroying our most holy faith and leading us to everlasting destruction! But these enemies of Christ and His Word are **doomed to failure** from the outset, for they fly in the face of the TRUTH, of established FACT, of incontrovertible EVIDENCE and eye-witness TESTIMONY. For *Jesus of Nazareth did in fact rise from His grave* on Easter Sunday morning after having *died* the previous Friday afternoon! His **true death** was certified by *objective*

*medical evidence* and by *professional evaluation*, and His **true life** after His resurrection was amply demonstrated “*by many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3). Consequently, the claims of unbelieving scoffers notwithstanding, the **FACT** of the Lord’s resurrection **speaks for itself!**

Therefore, what we want to examine in this present article is not so much the **FACT** but the **RESULT** of Jesus’ resurrection, namely, what it **accomplished** and why it is of such **importance** to us Christians. We note that the Easter angel’s message to the women at the empty sepulchre brings us a *fourfold comfort and assurance* from the Savior’s resurrection — the fourfold importance and comfort that we confess also in our *Catechism* (CPH, 1943, pp. 117-118).

The first of these is that, by rising from the dead, *Jesus of Nazareth proved Himself to be the very Son of God*. The words of the angel were plain enough: “*He is risen; He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him.*” The fact of Jesus’ resurrection was clear for anyone to see who cared to look at the evidence. “**Behold!**” said the angel; “**LOOK** at the place where you yourselves saw Him laid out on Good Friday afternoon, unmistakably dead, the blood solids already separated from the lymph, as the Roman centurion also saw and testified. **Look NOW** at the empty slab before you, the linen burial windings lying empty and the napkin from Jesus’ face neatly folded and laid aside as no hurried grave robber would have bothered to do. **See** for yourselves!” And this word “*behold*” points not only those women but also **US**, who have the additional Gospel accounts and their evidence, as well as the eyewitness testimony of literally hundreds who saw the Savior alive during the forty days following, yes, that word directs **US** to recognize *without doubt* the **FACT** of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

But the words “**He is risen!**” give us much more than a mere report of this **fact**. They convey to us the **assurance** that, in this mighty act, *Jesus proved Himself to be the very Son of God!* For who but **God alone** has the ability to raise Himself from the dead?? Who but the **almighty Lord of heaven and earth** could have exercised such superior might that, concerning His very own life, He could declare in advance: “*I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again*”?? Thus the Apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, chapter 1, verse 4, **confirms** this first assurance of the Easter angel, saying: “*He was declared to be the SON OF GOD with POWER...by the resurrection from the dead.*”

And, lest anyone dare claim that Jesus' words and promises were mere empty boasts and vain prophecies, the angel brings us his second Easter comfort and assurance, saying: "*Be not affrighted*" — don't be so **amazed** and **astonished**, as if this were an unexpected development — for, by His mighty resurrection from the dead, **Jesus of Nazareth has shown His Word to be the truth!** "*He is risen; He is not here...But He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.*" Jesus had not only promised to rise again on the third day, but He had told His disciples that they would see Him face-to-face thereafter in Galilee. And Matthew's record shows that the angel's words, "*as He said unto you,*" refer not only to Jesus' appearance in Galilee but to the **resurrection itself**; for Matthew quotes the angel as saying: "*He is risen, as He said!*" And St. Luke, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, adds striking detail, quoting TWO angels at the grave giving the women this assurance of the truth of Jesus' Word: "*Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spake unto you...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.*"

Why, even Jesus' enemies knew well His words concerning His resurrection from the dead. Oh, they **pretended** at first not to have understood them, when at His trial before Caiaphas they introduced false witnesses to make it seem as if He had threatened to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem and to rebuild it in three days. But they **gave themselves away** when, after His death, they went to Pilate for a seal on the grave, saying: "*Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'*" Pilate should have marked well and believed those words, for Jesus had told him in advance, "*Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice.*" Yea, **ALL** of Jesus' Word — not just the red print highlighted in modern-day Bibles, but **ALL** of the Holy Scriptures, which He identified as **His precious Word** — is the **TRUTH**, absolutely reliable in every detail; for He assures us: "*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).

And it is this very freedom to which the angel refers in the third assurance we have in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, namely, that **His heavenly Father accepted His vicarious sacrifice as payment-in-full for the sins of the world.** "*Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified,*" said the Easter angel. The very purpose of Jesus' crucifixion,

yea, of all His suffering, was to provide, **in our place and on our behalf**, a ransom-price of sufficient value that God in heaven would accept its payment as complete satisfaction of divine justice. Thus Isaiah had prophesied concerning Jesus in his 53rd chapter: “*The Lord hath laid on **Him** the iniquity of us all.*” Yes, “*Christ suffered for us,*” Peter writes in his first epistle, chapter 2, “*who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree*” — “*Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified.*”

And yet, if Jesus had suffered all that anguish, including the very pains of hell itself (Matthew 27:46, etc.) in our place, but then had **remained in the grave**, helplessly bound in the chains of death, His entire sacrifice would have been **for nothing!** For He would have been “shown up” to be a mere man, just another human being, “*none of [whom] can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is **precious!***” (Psalm 49:7-8). Then indeed we would be fools for trusting in Him as our Redeemer; for St. Paul writes in I Corinthians 15:17, “*If Christ be **not** raised, your faith is **vain**; ye are yet in your sins!*” We would still be lost and condemned, headed for hell!

But thanks be to God, beloved fellow-sinners, that Jesus of Nazareth did **NOT** remain in His grave but **rose victoriously** on Easter morning as the **Mighty Conqueror** of sin, death, and Satan — **not** just a mere man whose sacrifice of Himself would otherwise have been an empty gesture and completely in vain, but as the **certified Redeemer** of lost mankind! For the Bible tells us, Romans 4:25, “*Christ was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again **for our justification,***” as the sure sign that His payment **made good** our debt to God! That was God the Father’s *seal of approval*, so to speak, “*which **He** wrought **in Christ** when **He raised Him** from the dead*” (Ephesians 1:20).

What a wonderful assurance and comfort to us Christians is this glorious fact of God’s own Word, that the Father in heaven raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead as **ironclad testimony** that **He fully accepted the sacrifice of His Son for the reconciliation of the world** unto Himself, and has, because of what Jesus paid on our behalf, forgiven the sins of the whole world and declared all sinners righteous in His sight. This free gift of **OBJECTIVE JUSTIFICATION** He has published to all men in the Gospel, earnestly desiring “*all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (I Timothy 2:4), “*that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16). Thus,

as His adopted children and heirs of salvation by faith in His Son, we rejoice to praise Him with the Apostle Peter, saying: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a [living] hope **by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven **for YOU!**”* (I Peter 1:3-4).

And the promise of that blessed inheritance brings us now to the fourth and final assurance and comfort we have in the message of the Easter angel, namely, that ***we too shall see our Savior face-to-face at our own resurrection on the Last Day.*** For the angel instructed the women to tell Jesus’ disciples that He would go before them into Galilee; *“there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.”* We can well imagine the JOY that these words brought to the disciples with the prospect of seeing their Savior alive, face-to-face, just as He had promised them! But the angel’s words should fill also **OUR HEARTS** with the very same **joy of anticipation!** For the Lord’s promise to **US** is **just as sure** as His promise to the disciples! Yes, the **FRUIT of Jesus’ resurrection** will be **our own resurrection**, for He Himself links them together, saying: *“Because **I** live, **ye** shall live also.”* (John 14:19) *“I go to prepare a place **for you**,”* He tells us, *“and I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where **I** am, there **ye** may be also”* (John 14:2-3).

In Christ, our risen and everliving Savior, we have the very **prototype** of **our own** resurrection from **our own** graves on the Last Day; for as St. Paul assures us in I Corinthians 15, *“If in **this life only** we have hope in Christ, we are of all men **most miserable!** But now **IS** Christ risen from the dead and become the **firstfruits** of them that slept...but every man in his own order: Christ, the **firstfruits**”* [that is, the *prototype*] *“afterward **they that are Christ’s** at His coming.”* Even Job in the Old Testament was confident of his bodily resurrection to eternal life as an heir of God through faith in Christ his Savior; for he 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 be consumed within me!”* (Job 19:25-27).

O what sweet joy and gladness is ours this holy Easter season — joy not merely in the **FACT** of Jesus’ mighty resurrection from the dead, but, even **better**, joy in the blessed **RESULT** of this miracle-of-



miracles, yea, His own **assurance** to quell our fears and His own **comfort** to dry our tears! For Christ's resurrection *proves* without a doubt that He is truly the almighty **Son of God**. It *establishes* beyond any question the **truth** and **absolute reliability** of **His Word**. It *testifies* that God the Father was **completely satisfied with Jesus' sacrifice** for the reconciliation of the world. And it *assures* every believer, according to Jesus' own promise, of **resurrection in like manner** to everlasting glory on Judgment Day.

May the words of the Easter angel ever remind us of all these blessed assurances and strengthen our confidence in them day-by-day, until by God's matchless grace in Christ, our crucified and risen Redeemer, we enter the mansions He has prepared for us in His heavenly home and glorious kingdom!

*He lives! All glory to His Name!  
He lives, my Jesus still the same!  
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives:  
"I KNOW that my Redeemer LIVES!"*

(*T.L.H.*, 200, 8)

— **D. T. M.**

(This article originally appeared in the March-April issue, 2007)

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*A meditation upon a treasured hymn —*

***"Abide, O Dearest Jesus, among Us!"***

*"Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."*

—Luke 24:29

As we still bask in the afterglow of our Savior's mighty resurrection during these five weeks after Easter and gratefully take comfort in the four-fold assurance that it gives to us Christians (Cf. Q/A 152 in the *Exposition of Luther's Small Catechism*, C.P.H., 1943), we recall the Lord Jesus' walk with two disciples on Easter afternoon and the wonderful "Bible class" that He conducted for their benefit along the way to Emmaus. This encounter, well known to most of us since childhood

already when we studied it in Sunday School, is recorded in St. Luke's Gospel, chapter 24, beginning with verse 13.

As they set out on their seven and one-half mile trek from Jerusalem to Emmaus, Cleopas and the other disciple had one thing on their mind; and it was the topic of their conversation as they walked. It was "*all these things which had happened*" (v. 14) in the city over the past few days. They "*communed together and reasoned*" (v. 15), that is, they talked together and considered, all the events that had taken place regarding "*Jesus of Nazareth,*" their Friend, their Master, "*a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people*" (v. 19), who, they had trusted, would have been the long-promised Redeemer of Israel (v. 21). They were "*sad*" (v. 17), depressed and despondent, about the whole situation — a fact that Jesus said He specially noticed as He observed them — and He asked them why. They were frankly amazed that this man, whom they did not recognize at this point, had not heard about the goings on in Jerusalem during the past week. Why, just about everybody in the city knew what had taken place! Was he perhaps a stranger in town (v. 18)? And they proceeded to fill him in on all the details: The sinister plot of the chief priests to destroy Jesus, how they had arrested, convicted, condemned and crucified Him — all of which left His disciples sorely disappointed, especially since three days had now passed and they hadn't seen Him. (They no doubt had at least a vague recollection of Jesus' promise that He would rise again on the third day — Matthew 20:19; cf. 27:63; etc. — but nothing had come of it.) But then there were the reports of the women who had visited His sepulcher earlier that morning, had found it empty, and had said that angels had told them that He was alive (vv. 20–24)! What were they to make of all this?? They were so confused and bewildered!

St. Luke tells us that the "*eyes*" of the disciples "*were holden that they should not know Him*" (24:16). It wasn't that, in their grief, they simply did not recognize Jesus because they were psychologically unprepared to see Him, as some have alleged. Nor were they in a zombie-like trance, unable to distinguish reality from fantasy. On the contrary, they were fully conscious and completely lucid, quite capable of carrying on a protracted conversation with this "stranger." But the Lord Himself had kept them from recognizing Him and thus from placing their confidence in what their eyes perceived, rather than in what His Word revealed to them and of what His Word would ultimately convince them. Compare Jesus' words to Thomas one week later: "*Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed*" (John 20:29).

Jesus then made use of this opportunity to reprove the foolish disciples of their “*slow[ness] of heart to believe all that the prophets [had] spoken*” (v. 25); and, “*beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the **Scriptures** the things concerning Himself*” (v. 27). He did the same in the presence of the ten disciples in Jerusalem later that same evening, “*open[ing] their understanding that they might understand the **Scriptures**, and said unto them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day’*” (v. 46). Indeed, the key to acknowledging, accepting, and believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is NOT “seeing” Him and “recognizing” Him — as if we, as the disciples of old, might desire to have His visible presence among us; for, as Abraham said to the rich man in hell (Luke 16:31), “*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead!*” The key is **hearing** what “*the Scriptures*” have to say, that “*more sure Word of prophecy*” than even eye- and ear-witness testimony (II Peter 1:19), and **understanding** (Ephesians 1:17ff.) what God in Christ has done (and still does) for our salvation.

It is therefore significant for us, as we ponder now the lyrics of a well-known and beloved hymn based upon the words of our title-text, that Cleopas and the other disciple extended their invitation to Jesus, NOT because they then already recognized Him *with their eyes*, but because they recognized Him *in His Word*. For they said **in retrospect** upon His instruction, BEFORE “*their eyes were opened and they knew Him*” (v. 31), “*Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way and while He opened to us the Scriptures??*” (v. 32).

We therefore pray with the hymnist that our risen and everliving “dearest Jesus,” hidden from our eyes but present everywhere, also with **us**, according to His human nature (Matthew 28:20; Colossians 2:9), “abide...among us” very specially and significantly, in ways that we can understand and appreciate by faith in Him focused upon the **Scriptures**, with His “**grace**,” with His “**Word**,” with His “**brightness**,” with His “**blessings**,” with His “**protection**,” and with His “**love**.” In the case of each of these, a Scripture citation is included at the end of each strophe to sharpen the focus of our *spiritual* eyes to behold what great things our gracious God has done and still does for our salvation. We strongly suggest that you look these up for your edification as you read through the lines of this beloved hymn.

We sing in the first stanza of **Hymn 53** (*The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941):

Abide, O dearest Jesus, (Matthew 1:21)  
among us with Thy grace, (I Corinthians 16:23)  
that Satan may not harm us (I Peter 5:8-9)  
nor we to sin give place. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

In the second stanza we are reminded of the Savior's words, "*peace be unto you*" (John 20:19b) and the gladness that He brought them, not only through His visible presence, but especially by means of **His Word** (Luke 24:45):

Abide, O dear Redeemer, (Luke 24:21)  
among us with Thy Word; (Romans 10:8)  
and thus now and hereafter (Isaiah 54:10)  
true peace and joy afford. (Romans 14:17)

We beseech our Savior, "*the Light of the world*" (John 8:12), to abide with us in and through His enlightening Word so that we never "*sit in darkness and in the shadow of death*" (Luke 1:79) as "*strangers from the covenants of promise*" (Ephesians 2:12) or succumb to the efforts of the devil to "deceive us and seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice" (Luther):

Abide with heavenly brightness (Isaiah 60:19)  
among us, precious Light! (John 12:46)  
Thy truth direct and keep us (John 8:32)  
from error's gloomy night. (I John 4:6)

In the fourth stanza, we beseech the Savior's "blessings" upon us, not merely the *temporal* things which belong to "*daily bread*" (4<sup>th</sup> Petition of the Lord's Prayer), but particularly upon the "richest blessings," the *spiritual* blessings that we have and continue to enjoy, as we "*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*" (II Peter 3:18), nourished with His precious Word (Isaiah 55:1-3):

Abide with richest blessings (Psalm 103:2ff.)  
among us, bounteous Lord! (Psalm 13:5-6)  
Let us in grace and wisdom (Acts 20:32; Psalm 19:7)  
grow daily through Thy Word. (II Peter 3:18)

As was the case with Jesus' disciples, sorrow would indeed fill our hearts (John 16:6) at the thought of His absence from us, including the

prospect of not having His mighty protection against the trials and tribulations we still must face here in this world, were it not for His promise: “*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*” (Matthew 28:20b). For the ability to “*endure even unto the end*” (Matthew 24:13) lies not in us but in “*Him who is able to keep [us] from falling*” (Jude 1:24), “*the only wise God, our Savior*” (v. 25). And so we sing in the fifth stanza of our hymn:

Abide with Thy protection (Psalm 46)  
among us, Lord, our Strength, (Isaiah 41:10)  
lest world and Satan fell us (I John 2:15-17; I Peter 5:8)  
and overcome at length. (II Peter 2:18-20; Revelation 3:11)

Finally, we beseech our “faithful Savior” to “abide...among us” with His “love.” It is “*the love of Christ which passeth knowledge*” (Ephesians 3:19), which is incomprehensible for its vastness and for its selflessness in His humbling Himself to be our substitute under the Law and in the giving of His life as the ransom-price of man’s redemption; and it is beyond compare for its constancy, for its steadfastness, and for its constraining power in the hearts of true believers. “*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*” St. Paul asks rhetorically in Romans 8:35. Why, **nothing**, of course, as the apostle points out in the following verses! And so we pray with the hymnwriter:

Abide, O faithful Savior, (II Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 2:17; 10:23)  
among us with Thy love! (Romans 8:35; Ephesians 3:19)  
Grant steadfastness and help us (II Peter 3:17; Jude 1:24)  
to reach our home above! (II Timothy 4:18; Revelation 2:10)

To that blessed end, we have the Lord’s abiding Easter Benediction upon us from the Epistle to the Hebrews:

*“Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever! Amen.”* (Hebrews 13:20-21).

— D. T. M.

## Churches in Fellowship

### **ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH OF EKATERINBURG**

Ekaterinburg, Russia

**The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor**

P. O. Box 27

620039 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

**E-mail:** lutheran@r66.ru

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### **CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Olu-Ama (Kula), Nigeria

**Pastoral Vacancy at present**

### **ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Abule Egba, Lagos, Nigeria

**The Rev. Onesimus Ekele, Pastor**

### **HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Idama, Nigeria

**Pastoral Vacancy at present**

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

### **SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Abalama, Nigeria

**The Rev. Elison B. Agborubere, Pastor**

Thompson Compound Abalama

Abalama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

### **ST. CLEMENT'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Elem-Sangama, Nigeria

**Pastoral Vacancy at present**

St. Clement Lutheran Church,

Elem-Sangama Arch-Deaconry

Elem-Sangama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

### **ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

**The Rev. Allenson Karibi Asawo, Pastor**

76 Abba Street, Mile 1 Diobu

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

### **ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Kula, Nigeria

**Pastoral Vacancy at present**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

### **ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL**

Abonnema, Nigeria

**The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface and**

**The Rev. God'stime E. D. Douglas, Co-Pastors**

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

**E-Mail:** njohnfyeface@yahoo.co.uk



## Directory of Member Congregations

www.concordialutheranconf.com

### GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

4090 South Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730 Telephone (520) 721-7618

**Worship Service** ..... 9:30 a.m.

**Sunday School & Bible Class** ..... 10:45 a.m.

**The Rev. DAVID G. REDLIN, Pastor**

4050 South Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730 (520) 721-7618

**E-mail:** david.redlin@q.com

### PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Central Avenue at 171<sup>st</sup> Place, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 Telephone: (708) 532-4288

**Sunday School & Bible Class** ..... 8:30 a.m.

**Worship Service** ..... 10:00 a.m.

**The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor**

17151 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 (708) 532-9035

**E-mail:** pastormensing@yahoo.com

### ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixth and Tangent Streets, Lebanon, OR 97355 Telephone: (541) 258-2941

**Sunday School & Bible Class** ..... 10:00 a.m.

**Worship Service** ..... 11:00 a.m.

**The Rev. M. L. NATTERER, Pastor**

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355 (541) 258-2941

**E-mail:** m.l.natterer@comcast.net

### ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

5350 South Fountain Street, Seattle, WA 98178 Telephone: (206) 723-1078

**Sunday School & Bible Class** ..... 9:00 a.m.

**Worship Service** ..... 10:30 a.m.

**The Rev. EDWARD J. WORLEY, Pastor**

9658 – 54th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118 (206) 723-7418

**E-mail:** revworley@comcast.net

**NOTE:** Services are also held in **Victoria, British Columbia** on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Please call the Pastor for current location.

**Worship Service** ..... 7:00 p.m.

**Adult Bible Class** ..... 4:30 p.m.

**Adult Catechism Class** ..... 8:30 p.m.

### ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411 Telephone: (708) 757-6859

**Sunday School & Bible Class** ..... 8:45 a.m.

**Worship Service** ..... 10:00 a.m.

**The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor**

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411 (708) 757-6859

**E-mail:** revbloedel@gmail.com

### TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

300 North Ridgeland Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302 Telephone: (708) 386-6773

**Sunday School & Bible Class** ..... 9:00 a.m.

**Worship Service** ..... 10:15 a.m.

**The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor**

233 North Cuyler Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302 (708) 386-4145

**E-mail:** robertjlietz@yahoo.com

*Announcing...*

**The 62nd Annual Convention**

of the

**Concordia Lutheran Conference**

**June 28, 29 and 30, 2013**

at

**Peace Ev. Lutheran Church**

Oak Forest, Illinois

The Rev. David T. Mensing, Pastor

with the

**Plenary Pastoral Conference**

**on June 25 and 26**

and the

**Board of Directors Meeting on June 27**

Convention Motto:

**The Perspicuity of Holy Scripture**

Psalm 119:105, 130

The Friday Keynote Sermon is on **Psalm 119:105, 130**

The Sunday Convention Sermon is on **II Peter 1:19-21**

**Doctrinal Essay:**

**The Perspicuity of Holy Scripture**