

"The Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35.

"Thy Word is a Camp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path." Psalm 119:105.

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"It behooved

Christ
to suffer, and to
rise from the dead
the third day."

— Luke 24:46



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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.."

To set forth pertinent historical information which has a bearing upon the Church and to expose modern philosophical thought and the so-called scientific theories which contradict the Word of God.

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.

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The Vicarious Atonement in Isaiah 53

"For the transgression of My people was He stricken." — Isaiah 53:8



When we Christians use terminology that briefly and accurately describes a *Biblical truth* or a *doctrinal concept* as a short-cut intended to *simplify* that which otherwise might require a lengthy explanation, we are often accused of "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9) just because the terminology is nowhere found in the **Bible**—"liturgy," "sacrament," "unionism," "sinful separatism," etc., as just a few examples. But how about the terms "Trinity" and "Triune God"? They're not found in Scripture either, and yet no true Christian would deny that they are Scriptural concepts! Actually, most of our theological terminology is taken directly from the words of Holy Writ—terms like "redemption" (Romans 3:24, etc.), "justification" (Romans 4:25, etc.), "sanctification" (I Thessalonians 4:3), "regeneration" (Titus 3:5), "inspiration" (II Timothy 3:16), and many others.

The word "atonement," for example, is found well over seventy times in the Bible. It means, according to its dictionary definition, "satisfaction given for wrongdoing" and, theologically understood in the light of the New Testament, "the effect of Jesus' sufferings and death in redeeming mankind and bringing about the reconciliation of God to man" (Webster's New World Dictionary, 2nd College Edition). "Vicarious" means "taking the place of another thing or person; endured, suffered, or performed by one person in place of another" (Webster, op. cit.). Thus, the term vicarious atonement simply describes the all-sufficient payment that our Savior rendered to God as the Substitute for sinners in order to satisfy divine justice and to buy us back from "the curse of the Law" (Galatians 3:10, 13), namely, from "the wages of sin" (Romans 6:23), everlasting death in hell.

The entire fifty-third chapter of Isaiah's prophecy is devoted to the vicarious atonement of God's Messiah "for the transgression of [His] people" (v. 8). Why was an "atonement" necessary in the first place? And why did that atonement have to be "vicarious"? In order properly to understand this concept, it is necessary to recognize and acknowledge as an undeniable fact that, because of what man IS by nature — conceived and born in sin (Psalm 51:5), totally depraved and evil already from his youngness (Genesis 8:21), incapable of good according to God's standards (Romans 8:7), and inclined only to evil by nature (Romans 7:14ff.) — natural man is incapable of the perfection that God demands in His Law (Leviticus 19:2; Matthew 5:48; James 2:10; etc.) and cannot please God (Romans 8:8). Therefore it is **impossible** for sinful men, by what they themselves **DO**, to reconcile *themselves* unto God because the Bible rules out justification by works. St. Paul writes: "By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Romans 3:20a). Why? Because "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (v. 23). Moreover, since we are unable to save even *ourselves* by the deeds of the Law, so we are also incapable of helping or ransoming or redeeming anyone else by our wretched, imperfect works, or of atoning or paying for anyone else's sins by sacrifices we would make; for such offerings would never be "precious" enough to satisfy God's justice and to secure *anyone's* release from the curse of the Law (Psalm 49:7-8).

Even we Christians, who have been regenerated or "born again" (John 3:3) into a new spiritual life of sanctification by the operation of the Holy Ghost through the Means of Grace, whose *New Man* of faith is perfectly attuned to God's will and desirous to keep His Law, are unable to merit God's favor because of the *Old Adam* of sin that still dwells within us

(Romans 7:17), which keeps us from the perfection that God requires (Isaiah 64:6) and causes us to transgress His commandments (Galatians 5:19ff.). "O wretched man that I am!" cries out the Apostle Paul, recognizing his inability to keep God's Law and his need for deliverance "from the body of this death" by someone outside of himself (Romans 7:24).

Therefore it was Christ's fulfillment of the Law as the Substitute of sinners that merited God's favor. St. Paul writes to the Galatians that "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law to redeem them that were under the Law" (Galatians 4:4-5). Christ's office as the Redeemer of the world necessitated that, when He took upon Himself our human nature, when He took the manhood into God (Athanasian Creed), He be placed "under the Law," so that, not because He needed to for Himself, but because we needed Him to do it for us, Christ assumed our obligation to keep the Law of God perfectly, as our Substitute, for our benefit; and by His active obedience He perfectly fulfilled God's prescriptive demands of Us and thus both earned and set before the throne of God's justice His perfect righteousness that is imputed to us by faith in His vicarious atonement, the "wedding garment" which gains us entrance into the marriage feast of heaven (Matthew 22:11ff.; Isaiah 61:10).

Thus "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Romans 10:4); for "as by the offense of one [namely, Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One [namely, Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience the* many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall the* many be made righteous" (Romans 5:18-19 — *NOTE: "The many" in the Greek text clearly teaches both universal guilt and universal redemption and justification.). The Apostle does not limit "the obedience of One" to Christ's being "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8), that is, to Christ's passive obedience; but he contrasts Christ's "obedience" to Adam's "disobedience," Christ's "righteousness" to Adam's "offense," Christ's keeping of the Law to Adam's lawlessness. The Formula of Concord also clearly teaches that Christ's active obedience was an integral part of His vicarious atonement or satisfaction, as follows:

His obedience, not only in suffering and dying, but also in this, that He in our stead was voluntarily made under the Law and fulfilled it by His obedience, is imputed to us for righteousness, so that on account of this complete obedience, which He rendered to His heavenly Father

for us, by *doing* and suffering, in living and dying, God forgives our sins, regards us as Godly and righteous, and eternally saves us. (*Formula of Concord*, Thor. Decl., III, 15, *Triglot*, pp. 919-921).

But Isaiah's description of our Savior's suffering and death in chapter 53 of his prophecy speaks <u>not</u> of His ACTIVE obedience but of His PAS-SIVE obedience, namely, His obedience "unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8), that facet of Christ's vicarious atonement that made satisfaction for our transgressions by His payment of the PEN-ALTY of our guilt. Thus Christ "redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13). As the Substitute for sinners, Christ bore the guilt of all mankind, as if He Himself had been the transgressor; for "[God had] made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21). Indeed, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (I Peter 3:18).

The Law **condemns** both <u>sin</u> and <u>the sinner</u>; and, apart from Christ and His *vicarious atonement*, God **hates** both <u>sin</u> and <u>the sinner</u> (Psalm 5:5). God declares according to His justice: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" (Ezekiel 18:4) and "The wages of sin is death!" (Romans 6:23). "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them!" (Galatians 3:10).

Consequently it was no mistake, nor was it an accident, a happenstance, a coincidence, or a "twist of cruel fate" that Jesus "was numbered with the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12). For this was prophesied of Him by Isaiah over seven hundred years in advance of His crucifixion as one of the marks by which the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel, would be identifiable. When "with Him they crucified two thieves, the one on His right and, and the other on His left," St. Mark directly connects even that VISIBLE juxtaposition of Jesus and the malefactors there on Calvary's hill with that prophecy of Isaiah, saying: "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, 'And He was numbered with the transgressors'" (Mark 15:27-28). Yea, "all this [all the gruesome detail of Jesus' great passion recorded in the Gospel accounts] was done that the Scriptures of the prophets [that is, of the Old Testament, penned by inspiration of the Holy Ghost] might be ful*filled*" (Matthew 26:56) concerning the *vicarious atonement* of Christ. For Jesus Himself, speaking to His disciples after His resurrection, pointed out "'that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning Me.'

Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer'" (Luke 24:44-46).

But Christ "was numbered with the transgressors" not only PHYSICALLY and VISUALLY, as is obvious from the record; but He "was numbered with the transgressors" also FORENSICALLY, that is, JURIDICALLY or LE-GALLY. It is an undeniable fact that Jesus of Nazareth was arrested, tried, convicted, sentenced and executed as a **felon**. This is a matter of record. Indeed, the well-known Passion History of our Lord and Savior Jesus *Christ*, compiled by Martin Chemnitz [1522*-1586 □] according to the four evangelists, reports in scrupulous detail every facet of His "case" and remains to this day the inerrant, immutable, and therefore unassailable documentation upon which every objective historian (and every true believer) can absolutely rely: Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane by a deputized, armed posse which apprehended Him, bound Him, and took Him into custody (Matthew 26:55 and 57). He was tried in the religious court of the Jews before two justices, the retired High Priest, Annas, and the sitting High Priest, Caiaphas (John 18:13 and 24); and, although false testimony borne against Jesus backfired when the witnesses contradicted one another (Mark 14:59), He was ultimately charged with "blasphemy" because He had sworn in open court that He was the Son of God (Matthew 26:63-65). He was convicted of that **capital crime** (Leviticus 24:16; Matthew 26:66) by unanimous vote of the members of the Sanhedrin present at His trial. However, because the Jews, as Roman colonials, no longer had the right to inflict the death penalty, Jesus was bound over to the court of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, for sentencing. Pilate quickly recognized that the chief priests of the Jews had "delivered Him for envy" (Mark 15:10) and that the added allegations of incitement to tax evasion and treason were completely unfounded (Luke 23:14). Nevertheless, under extreme political pressure (John 19:12b), Pilate complied with the Jews' demand for a sentence of death and "delivered Jesus to their will" (Luke 23:25) "to be crucified" (John 19:16), citing Him on the death warrant as "the king of the Jews" (Matthew 27:37).

Therefore the Prophet Isaiah says that the people who witnessed the Messiah's suffering and death "did esteem [regard] Him stricken, smitten of GoD and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:4). The Jews who demanded Christ's crucifixion regarded the suffering "Christ, the King of the Jews" to be guilty-as-charged of blasphemy and therefore receiving the punishment of God Himself (Matthew 27:41ff.). And so it was; for the Savior cried out from His cross (in fulfillment of Psalm 22:1), "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me??" (Matthew 27:46).

How was it possible for Christ to have been "guilty-as-charged"?? Although Jesus was (and is) the holy Son of God, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (I Peter 2:22), the sins of the world were **imputed to HIM**, as if He Himself had committed them, as if He Himself had been guilty of them, as if He Himself had been deserving of punishment because of them. For God had "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us," Paul writes in II Corinthians 5:21. God had transferred man's sin and guilt and shame and dread of punishment —yea, even the justly merited punishment for sin— to Christ, the Sin-bearer. Thus we hear the Savior in prophecy confessing through the Psalmist: "O God, Thou knowest My foolishness; and My sins are not hid from Thee" (Psalm 69:5). And in the Garden of Gethsemane, He cried: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death!" (Matthew 26:38), as His guilt-ridden agony became so intense that His sweat "was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). Moreover, Isaiah writes concerning the punishment meted out upon the suffering Messiah: "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" (53:9b-10a). Christ suffered the unmitigated wrath of God, God's condemnation, rejection, and abandonment—the torments of the damned in hell— as in "the travail of His soul" (Isaiah 53:11a) He cried out: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me??" (Matthew 27:46).

But we note yet, as the most important observation of all for our salvation that "He was numbered with the transgressors" VICARIOUSLY, as our Substitute. For God had "made Him who knew no sin [our sinless Redeemer] to be sin FOR US," says Paul (II Corinthians 5:21). "He was wounded for OUR transgressions; He was bruised for OUR iniquities; ... the Lord hath laid on HIM the iniquity of US ALL. ... For the transgression of My people was He stricken ... for He shall bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5, 6, 8, 11). In His **PASSIVE OBEDIENCE**, "in due time **Christ** died for the ungodly; ...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for US. ...when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His **Son**" (Romans 5:6, 8, 10). Out of love and mercy to us poor sinners, Christ, "being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23) according to the Eternal Decree of Redemption, became the Scapegoat, the Sin-bearer, the Substitute for sinners. God, as noted above, imputed the sins of all men to CHRIST and then took out the full force of His wrathful **justice** upon **HIM** instead of upon **us**. Thus, with the demands of His justice perfectly satisfied, God "reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing

their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation," the precious Word of the Gospel, that this is an ACCOM-PLISHED FACT (II Corinthians 5:18-19)! Why?? Because Christ "was numbered with the transgressors"—among transgressors, as a transgressor, and on behalf of transgressors, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21). "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief. When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of 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 53:10-11).

This whole scenario, including the record that Jesus had been executed as a **convicted felon**, *still* contributes substantially to the fact that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (I Corinthians 1:18), both to the Jews and to the Greeks. For to natural man, to the unconverted sinner who is ignorant of God's eternal Decree of Redemption to save lost and fallen mankind by the death of His Son, it makes NO SENSE to preach that the Messiah died as a criminal among **criminals**—the Messiah who claimed to be the Son of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Hero of His people, and the Head of His Church! Why would He have permitted Himself to be arrested in the first place, to be treated as an evildoer, to be bound and remanded, to be **tried** on **criminal charges** (even though they were trumped-up), to be **convicted** of a heinous moral offense and a capital crime, and finally to be **executed** in a vile and inhumane manner?! To natural man, it is "foolishness" to preach and to believe that "for us and for our salvation" [Nicene Creed] Christ "humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).

But "[Christ] was delivered for our offenses," writes St. Paul in Romans 4:25a. He fully kept the Law of God in our place, thereby earning righteousness for the unrighteous, to be imputed by God to all the world for Christ's sake; and He bore both the guilt and the punishment of all men's trespasses in their stead, as their Substitute, so that "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Since God has been "propitiated" by the vicarious atonement, the vicarious satisfaction of His justice, rendered by His beloved Son, in whom He is well-pleased (Matthew 17:5), because Christ's atonement was perfect and complete, "once for all" (Hebrews 10:10), and not merely a "down payment" of sorts which we must supplement by our own works of merit, God now looks upon us differently

than His justice would require <u>apart</u> from Christ's redemptive work; and He is able to be gracious and merciful unto us without transgressing His divine justice, "that [as the gift of His grace] we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:5), that we might become "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26).

Therefore we Christians treasure, as a Scripture reading for Good Friday, the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, as the "classical" prophecy of Christ's vicarious atonement in His passive obedience, as "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. ... The Lord hath laid on **Him** the iniquity of **us all**. 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 of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." (Selected verses). And the Lord's apostles remind us that this *vicarious* satisfaction of God's justice was not just for Israel according to the flesh, but **for us** as well, and for **all mankind**: "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold..., 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" (I Peter 1:18-20) to be "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:2). "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8), "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

Since Christ hath full atonement made and brought to us salvation, each Christian therefore may be glad and build on this foundation:

Thy grace alone, dear Lord, I plead;
Thy death is now my life indeed, for Thou hast paid my ransom!

(TLH 377, 6)

—D. T. M.



Why It Behooved Christ to Suffer

"Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day." — Luke 24:46

Shortly after Peter's clear confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16), the Lord had to rebuke Peter with "Get thee behind Me, Satan! Thou art an offense unto Me" (Matthew 16:23a). The reason why this was necessary is also clearly expressed by the Lord, "for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matthew 16:23b). Peter, blessed by the Father's revelation regarding the true identity of the Son of Man (v. 17), had begun to rebuke the Lord after the Savior had laid out in outline-detail His sufferings (Matthew 16:21). The Son of the living God had told the disciples how He must suffer, be killed and be raised again. Peter had then taken the Lord aside and began to rebuke Him! Peter tried to change the Lord's "must" to "shall not be!" (Matthew 16:22). According to the Lord's own infallible judgment, this action was entirely due to Peter's carnal desires set in opposition to God's own will.

How can we avoid falling into the same thinking? Only the Holy Ghost can empower and motivate us to savor the things that be of God. He does so by His Word. We are to receive Holy Writ "not as the word of men but, as it is in truth, the Word of God," the very Word of God "which effectually worketh also in [us] that believe" (I Thessalonians 2:13).

The Word of God which gives us our title, "Why It *Behooved* Christ to Suffer," is Luke 24:46: "And [Jesus] said unto them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." The Savior spoke these words on Easter Sunday when He, the risen

Savior, appeared to the eleven (Luke 24:36). He had made this declaration to them: "... These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me" (Luke 24:44). And then He had opened their understanding to enable them to understand Holy Writ regarding His person and work (Luke 24:45).

He states "<u>Thus</u> it is written, and <u>thus</u> it behooved," making clear the simple yet sublime fact that all that was written aforetime regarding His work obligated Him to do what He had done.

The Greek word translated "behooved" refers to "necessity." How necessary the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ was is no mystery. This was God's eternal will! The only true God, the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, had foreordained this plan from eternity! The eternal counsel and decree of the Holy Trinity was laid out in all the Old Testament prophecies concerning the promised Messiah, the very ones Christ had just "expounded unto them [the two disciples] in all the Scriptures...concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27) on the road to Emmaus!

This was the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23); this was what God's hand and God's counsel "determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28); this was what "God ordained before the world began" (I Corinthians 2:7; I Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2). This was God's eternal plan for the redemption of the entire sinful human race. In God's mind and will Christ is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8), for "known to God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). God's eternal plan is recorded in Holy Scripture. As Peter explained to the Jewish people: "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up and denied Him in the presence of Pilate when he was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses ... But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled" (Acts 3:13-15, 18).

Why did it *behoove* Christ to suffer, to die and to rise again? First and foremost, because this was God's eternal will to save mankind, as clearly revealed in Holy Scripture!

In His earthly, visible ministry, the Lord revealed the details of His Passion in a progressively emphatic manner. Even so, in the Old Testament there are many clear passages that point to His suffering, death and resurrection; but some are more specific and emphatic. Thus the Apostle Paul explains that the Gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, is "according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets...made known" (Romans 16:25b-26). "The New Testament lies in the Old concealed; the Old Testament is in the New revealed" (Augustine). This is shown also by the ability of the Apostle Paul to prove everything Christ did from Old Testament proof passages: "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." (Acts 17:2-3).

The Holy Trinity determined <u>in eternity</u> already everything necessary to accomplish <u>in time</u> the work of redemption, revealing the details <u>over time</u> in Holy Writ.

God's will as He has revealed it to us in His Word (Deuteronomy 29:29) demonstrates to poor sinners the *character* of the Holy Trinity as the gracious, merciful, longsuffering, forgiving God, the Savior of all mankind (Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 145:8). The Father's undeserved love gave us His Son (John 3:16); the Son had to be about His Father's business of saving men so that, in love, He gave Himself for us, freely and willingly (Ephesians 5:2); He was conceived in the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:35), thereby becoming a true man and taking the human nature into God (I Timothy 3:16; Colossians 2:9). God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost without measure (Psalm 45:7; John 3:34) as the very Messiah or Christ (the Anointed One) of God (Matthew 16:16), whose work for our salvation was ordained already in eternity (I Peter 1:18-21); and the Holy Ghost continuously bore witness to His person and work, both before (Luke 4:18-19) and after His ascension into heaven (John 15:26). Thus all three persons of the Holy Trinity worked together to execute the eternal plan in time. The Holy Trinity desired to save mankind in a specific way to the glory of His Grace (Galatians 1:3-5).

Yes, it behooved Christ to *suffer*. Salvation is a gift bought and paid for by the Son of God Himself. He suffered what was *necessary* to redeem us to God and thus to make salvation happen.

What was *necessary*? Two essential problems needed to be solved. Sinful mankind needed a perfect righteousness of life before God in order to fulfill the just demand of His holy Law: "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:44). Since man was (and is) unable to meet that just demand, a perfect fulfilling of the Law sufficient for all men had to be proffered in man's stead by someone capable of rendering it. And a payment-in-full for the guilt of all sinners had to be rendered in man's place by someone who could suffer the entire punishment mankind had merited under God's justice!

This necessary work required the necessary person — one who was both qualified and able to accomplish the work "once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). Only the God-Man, the Anointed One, the Messiah, would and could do what was necessary. Thus from the beginning of time (Genesis 3:15) God revealed to His fallen creatures that their Savior would not only be true man, as their substitute, but also the Lord God Himself (Genesis 4:1). As **true man** the Savior would be able to stand in mankind's stead, under both the obligation and penalty of the Law, to keep the Law for man and thus to earn for him the righteousness required for entrance into the heavenly Paradise, AND to suffer and die in man's place and thus to render to God the payment due for his transgressions (Galatians 4:4-5; Hebrews 2:14).

The saving work of redemption also required that the Savior be **true God**. Why was <u>this</u> *necessary*? Our Catechism (*Luther's Small Catechism*, CPH, 1943) lays out the answer in three points:

It was necessary for our Savior to be true God —

A. That His fulfilling of the Law might be sufficient for all men;

"None of them 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)

"By the obedience of One shall [the] many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19).

B. That *His life* and *death* might be a *sufficient ransom* for our redemption;

"The Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

C. That He might be able to overcome death and the devil for us.

"Christ hath abolished death" (II Timothy 1:10).

"Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57).

As the holy, meek, unspotted Lamb, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, "being made a curse for us," suffering the eternal torments and agonies of the damned — Himself being cursed and God-forsaken atop Golgotha's hill — the Victim, hanging on a tree (Galatians 3:13). On Good Friday He tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9), drinking down to the very dregs the cup of God's just wrath (Matthew 26:42) against an ungodly world. God damned His only-begotten, beloved Son for you and for me. Christ "suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (I Peter 3:18) redeemed, restored, and forgiven by His bloody sufferings and death (I Peter 1:18-19)!

The proof of His success is His mighty resurrection from the dead! St. Paul writes in Romans 4:25, "[He] was delivered for [i.e. because of (Greek)] our offenses, and was raised again for [i.e. because of (Greek)] our justification."

He was raised again because our justification was successful, because He did all that was necessary to accomplish the propitiation of God's justice on our behalf (I John 2:2), to finish the work His Father gave Him to do (Romans 3:25)! God the Father accepted the sacrifice of His Son for the reconciliation of the entire ungodly world! "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in His sight" (Colossians 1:19-22). Even the Old Testament spoke of His resurrection as proof of His successful completion of redeeming all mankind: "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief. When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin,

He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong because He hath poured out His soul unto death; and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:10-12). Yes, Christ not only had to suffer but also had to rise again!

Throughout the New Testament our Lord Jesus referred to the *necessity* of fulfilling the entire will of His Father in regard to His saving work (Luke 2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 13:33; 17:25, cf. 24:7). The Savior willingly, perfectly and completely fulfilled all that the Father had given Him to do in all holy obedience (John 10:17-18; Galatians 2:20). He always did those things that pleased the Father (John 8:29). We have perfect salvation because our perfect Savior fulfilled the plan of salvation under God's holy Law perfectly.

What does this mean for a true believer in Christ? It means *certainty* of salvation! It means that he can be sure and certain that there is nothing he has to do to earn God's favor or to pay for his sins because Christ already did all that was necessary to give a sinner righteousness and remission of all sin! It is written of our Savior: "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). He "offered one sacrifice for sins forever" (Hebrews 10:12), "for by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14). Therefore "there is no more offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18). We are enabled by faith in the Gospel of Christ's perfect satisfaction of divine justice to draw near to God "with a true heart in full assurance..., having our hearts sprinkled from an evil [guilty, accusing] conscience" (Hebrews 10:22).

Moreover, when we as believers must suffer in this world, we know God is not punishing us for our sins — He already punished Christ fully in our place for every sin we have committed and shall ever commit! Christ already paid this full price! Our suffering, then, must be understood, not as punishment from an angry God, but as a loving chastisement from our loving, heavenly Father, who desires to keep us humbly dependent on His grace in Christ alone: "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" (Hebrews 12:6-7). By faith in the

Gospel we are therefore enabled to say with the Psalmist: "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Let, I pray Thee, Thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Thy Word unto Thy servant" (Psalm 119:75-76). Our personal suffering is thus sanctified for our benefit as all things work together for our good (Romans 8:28), as we rely on God's grace for help in every need (II Corinthians 12:9-10). We know that, for Christ's sake, we shall be enabled by God's grace to endure the "much tribulation" that we should even now expect and, in the end, enter eternal life (Acts 14:22c). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively 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 who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (I Peter 1:3-9). This is the gift that Christ, our beloved Savior. Jesus, earned for us by His holy life and purchased for us by His innocent suffering and death. This is why it was necessary for Him, why "it behooved Christ," to suffer: The salvation of our souls!

When o'er my sins I sorrow,
Lord, I will look to Thee
and hence my comfort borrow
that Thou wast slain for me.
Yea, Lord, Thy precious blood was spilt
for me, O most unworthy,
to take away my guilt.

Oh, what a marvelous offering!
Behold, the Master spares
His servants, and their suffering
and grief for them He bears.
God stoopeth from His throne on high;
for me, His guilty creature,
He deigns as man to die.

My manifold transgression henceforth can harm me none since Jesus' bloody Passion for me God's grace hath won.

His precious blood my debts hath paid; of hell and all its torments

I am no more afraid.

Therefore I will forever give glory unto Thee,
O Jesus, loving Savior,
for what Thou didst for me.
I'll spend my breath in songs of thanks
for Thy sad cry, Thy sufferings,
Thy wrongs, Thy guiltless death. Amen.

(TLH 152)

—Е. J. W.



Jesus' Appearance on Easter Afternoon



What does the resurrection of Christ mean to us? It should mean everything, for it is pivotal to the Christian faith, as St. Paul points out so forcefully in I Corinthians 15:14-20. It definitely proves that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Romans 1:4), who has all power in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18). It confirms that His doctrine is the truth (John 2:19) and that what He says in His Word, the Bible, is absolutely true (John 8:31-32). It seals to us the forgiveness of all our sins; for Christ accomplished what His Father had sent Him to do (John 5:36-37;

17:4; 18:11b; 19:30) according to God's eternal decree of redemption (Acts 2:23; I Peter 1:20), fulfilled the Law in the place of sinful mortals (Romans 10:4), and willingly paid the price for the sins of the world with His suffering and death on the cross (I Peter 1:18-19; I John 1:7b); and God showed His acceptance of His Son's sacrifice when He raised Him from the dead (Romans 4:25; I Corinthians 15:17). In addition, when Christ rose from the dead, He sealed to all believers their own resurrection to eternal life on the Last Day (John 14:19).

The resurrection of Jesus and almost all of His witnessed appearances that followed happened within a short period of time (Acts 1:3; I Corinthians 15:4-8). And for the true believers who were living at the time these were momentous events. Their faith had been shaken by the trials of Jesus before the Jewish and Roman leaders (Luke 24:20). Doubts assailed them when they witnessed or heard of Jesus' death (v. 21). And all doubt did not disappear even when they heard that Christ had risen from the grave (vv. 22-24). So what did it take to persuade them? They needed what Christians of all times have ever needed — the Truth of God's Word (John 8:31-32). The two disciples on the way to Emmaus heard it directly from their Lord and Savior as He instructed them from the Scriptures (Luke 24:27, 32) and then confirmed the prophecies with His personal appearance (v. 35). And since His ascension into heaven, Christians have heard His resurrection preached and taught to them from God's inspired words in the Bible (Luke 24:45-47; I Corinthians 15:14-15; etc.).

In the tenth chapter of Luke we are told that Christ, besides the smaller circle of "the twelve" apostles, had a larger circle of seventy disciples, whom He had sent out to preach in His name as His advance-men. The two disciples that walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the afternoon of the Day of Christ's Resurrection may well have belonged to this larger circle of Christ's disciples. The name of the one was Cleopas, while the other is not named in Scripture.

Now these two disciples had left the others in Jerusalem and headed toward the little town of Emmaus, about seven miles away, where they intended to spend the night (Luke 24:29). As they walked, they talked about all the things that had happened in Jerusalem that weekend, especially about the arrest, trials, crucifixion and death of Jesus, and how their hopes that Jesus had been not only a mighty prophet but God's own Messiah seem to have been dashed by this tragic turn of events (vv. 19-21). They were in a state of confusion, saddened by what had

taken place and, at the same time, cautiously curious about a rumor that Christ had risen from the dead, a report that had not been verified except by some women whose words the disciples did not regard as reliable (v. 11).

But while they were walking along, conversing sadly (v. 17), a "stranger" caught up with them and joined them. For all they knew, he could have been an out-of-towner who had attended the feast of the Passover and was now on his way home. At least, he didn't seem to know much about what had transpired (v. 18); and so they tried to fill him in on the disappointing events they were discussing. But it was Jesus, the risen Lord, whose identity had been withheld from them for the present (v. 16).

"What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" (Luke 24:17). With this question the risen Lord politely interrupted their conversation and sought to draw them out so that they would share with Him their concerns. "And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, 'Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" (v. 18). And the two told him all that had happened to Jesus of Nazareth, "which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." They revealed how the chief priests and rulers had Him condemned to death and crucified three days before, and how certain women had gone to the tomb earlier that day and had found the tomb empty and "had seen a vision of angels which said that He was alive" (v. 23). They also told Him about Peter and John's visit to the tomb and their investigation, but that they hadn't actually seen Jesus.

Then the "stranger" suddenly took charge of the conversation and expressed surprise and even outrage that the disciples didn't see all of this coming according to the Old Testament prophecies: "'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (vv. 25-27). This is very important for us Christians to witness in this Gospel account; for it was not Jesus' visible appearance that was supposed to convince these disciples, but the written Word of God, "the Scriptures," which more than adequately testify of Him (John 5:39). In fact, the principle that Jesus Himself stated in His story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is: "If they

hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

And as they approached Emmaus, the sun was going down; and the disciples were going to find a place to stay the night. Jesus indicated that He would continue on. "But they constrained Him, saying, 'Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.' And He went in to tarry with them." (v. 29). The three first sat down for a bite of supper, and something unusual happened. "And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them" (v. 30). Jesus was the guest, and yet He assumed the duties of the head of the home or of the host. For He took bread from the table, pronounced the customary blessing over it, broke it into portions, and distributed it to His dinner companions. He simply did what He was accustomed to doing when He ate with His own band of disciples. There is not the slightest hint in the text that this was a celebration of the Lord's Supper, as some Roman Catholics have claimed, and that the risen Lord celebrated the Sacrament using only the bread and not the wine. This was simply a light supper, such as the disciples no doubt enjoyed frequently with Jesus during the forty days after His resurrection (Acts 10:41).

But what happened "in [the] breaking of bread" (v. 35) by the Lord Jesus? We don't know whether He had used a special blessing, or whether He had a certain way of breaking and distributing bread that His disciples easily recognized. In any case, "Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him" (v. 31a). The veil, as it were, dropped from their eyes, and they knew Him at once. They knew that it was the Lord. He had indeed risen from the grave, as He had said He would. The women had told the truth. And the prophecies of the Scriptures that Jesus had pointed out to them had been fulfilled. But before they could communicate further with Him, He vanished out of their sight. He had accomplished His purpose with them. He had removed their doubts about His suffering, death, and resurrection. Looking back on it, they were no doubt surprised that they had not recognized Him earlier, for "they said one to another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).

And what further effect did this appearance of the risen Lord produce? Though the two disciples evidently had intended to stay in the village overnight, "they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem" (Luke 24:33a). They were anxious to tell the good news to their

fellow disciples, to tell them how the risen Lord was their companion on the way to Emmaus, what all He had said to them and taught them from the Scriptures, and that He had been their guest at supper. And when they arrived at Jerusalem, they "found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.' And they told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread" (vv. 33b-35).

One of the comforts and blessings of Christ's resurrection, confirmed by His words to the disciples just before He ascended into heaven, is that He will always be with us, "even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20b); He will always be our guest as He was the guest of those disciples at Emmaus, as He promises to be in the midst of even two or three who are gathered together in His Name (Matthew 18:20). For Christ dwells not only among but in the hearts of all true believers. St. Paul beseeches God that He would grant us the blessing "that Christ may dwell in [our] hearts by faith" (Ephesians 3:17). He enters into our hearts by means of His Word and Sacraments and makes them His holy temple.

It is therefore not in vain that we pray to our risen and ever-living Savior at mealtime and say, "Come, Lord Jesus, be our Guest, and let Thy gifts to us be blest." It is not in vain that we invite Him, as did the two disciples, to "abide with us" throughout our lives, saying, "Abide, O dearest Jesus, among us with Thy grace, with Thy Word, with Thy Truth, with Thy blessings, with Thy protection, and with Thy love" (TLH 53). And it is not in vain that we sing, "Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide, for round us falls the eventide; nor let Thy Word, that heavenly Light, for us be ever veiled in night" (TLH 292, 1). "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers" (I Peter 3:12). And even when death comes and we confidently yield ourselves into the loving arms of our living Redeemer, we can depend on the never-failing presence of our risen Lord to accompany us safely home to heaven, confessing with David, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

— D. G. R.



Consequences of Denying the Resurrection of the Body

"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised."
—I Corinthians 15:16

The resurrection of the body is something that human reason tends to reject, or at least to regard with much skepticism. Recall how the Athenians at Mar's Hill listened to the preaching of St. Paul with interest until he mentioned the resurrection of the dead (Acts 17:32). It should not surprise us when the unbelievers mock our belief in the bodily resurrection of the dead, since it is something that lies completely outside the realm of anything we are able to observe in the world around us. Especially considering how thoroughly and completely the human body decays after it dies, it is understandable why human reason might dismiss

as utter nonsense any ideas that a disintegrated body could be restored again to life. Certainly, after death our bodies will decompose—"they die, and return to their dust" (Psalm 104:29). However, the same God who had the power to make man out of the dust of the ground in the beginning is equally able to reconstruct and resurrect bodies that have long ago died and returned to dust. Anyone who believes in an omnipotent God should have no problems accepting this fact. But sadly, even among many who call themselves Christians, the resurrection of the body is regarded as an unbelievable fiction. Modern rationalists deny both the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day, and there are even so-called "Lutheran" pastors among them! In so doing, such false Christians in effect reject both the authority of the Scriptures and the chief doctrine of the Christian religion, namely, that our sins are forgiven on account of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ without any merit or worthiness in us (Romans 3:24; 5:6, 8, 10).

This is not, however, a strictly "modern" trend. Already in the church at Corinth there were some, in spite of the faithful teaching of Paul, Apollos, and Peter, who denied the resurrection of the dead (I Corinthians 15:12), and therefore, though perhaps they did not realize it, denied also Christ's own resurrection (v. 13). Although they were outwardly members of the church at Corinth, if they denied the resurrection of Jesus Christ, their professed faith in Him would be meaningless and they would still be in their sins (v. 17). But how was it that such people were allowed to continue in the Corinthian congregation? The answer is simply this: In the absence of the Apostle Paul, church discipline was not being exercised according to the Lord's instruction in Matthew 18:15-17. This, then, as one would expect, resulted in a number of open sins and errors being minimized, overlooked, and tolerated in the congregation. However, when Paul became apprised of these matters, he rightly dealt with them in his apostolic letter even before he was able to travel to Corinth himself. Consider the following quotations from his first epistle to the Corinthians: "It hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you" (1:11). "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will" (4:18-19). "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife" (5:1). "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (5:13). "I speak to your shame. ... Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. ... Nay, ye do

wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren" (6:5–8). "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (11:29–30). "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (15:12).

Indeed, these were serious matters that needed to be addressed; they could not be ignored. Since this latter error in particular was being tolerated, there were obviously those in the congregation who did not realize why it was such a "big deal" that some chose to deny the resurrection of the dead. The Holy Ghost, therefore, moved the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15 to show, by means of sound logic, the consequences of denying the resurrection of the body: If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ, who truly died on the cross, could not have been raised to life again (vv. 13, 16); and if Christ did not rise from the dead, then Paul and his fellow apostles were false witnesses; for they proclaimed His resurrection and testified that they had seen Him alive in His resurrected body (v. 15; also vv. 4-9). Furthermore, if Christ did not rise from the grave, the Christian faith would be meaningless and without profit (vv. 14, 17); for if Christ had remained dead in the grave, His work to redeem us would have been but a failed attempt, His declaration "It is finished!" would have been a lie, and we would still be in our sins (v. 17; see also Romans 4:25). Accordingly, if there is no resurrection of the dead, and if Christ is not risen, then all those who departed this life trusting in Jesus are perished forever in hell (v. 18). And if the resurrection of the body is nothing but a myth to help us cope with the thought of death as we live our lives here on earth, and if our Christian faith is confidence in a mere delusion—then in reality "we are of all men most miserable" (v. 19). These are the serious and horrendous consequences of denying the resurrection of the body!

All of these consequences are set forth in I Corinthians 15 using clear and penetrating logic. Even though our faith is not based on reason but upon the Scriptures, sound reasoning should not be automatically rejected by Christians as if logic, in and of itself, is a bad thing. The Lord Jesus Himself employed the technique of logical argumentation when He 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). Human reason and the rules of logic can be used properly in theology, as long as they are placed <u>under</u> the authority of the Scriptures to serve divine revelation [ministerial use of reason], and are not exalted above

God's Word [magisterial use of reason]. Certainly the rationalism of the Reformed—which shows itself in such errors as their denial of the real presence of Christ's true body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar—is a blasphemous use, a misuse, of reason that must be condemned and rejected, as Paul declares in his second letter to the Corinthians: "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (10:5).

There are things about God and His ways that simply exceed the bounds of human understanding, reason and logic (such as the mystery of the Trinity and why God did not predestinate all to salvation). That there are such things that transcend our reason should not surprise us or offend us; but it should humble us, and remind us how inferior our minds are to the mind of the Lord God. "'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' saith the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isaiah 55:8–9). "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counselor?" (Romans 11:33-34). We do not need to understand exactly how God is going to resurrect bodies that have long ago died, decayed, and become absorbed into the ground or been consumed by animals. We leave that to the Lord and simply trust His Word that on the Last Day "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth" (John 5:28-29). So each one of us can confidently affirm in the words of Job: "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" (19:26-27).

Despite such clear declarations from the Bible, there are those who call themselves "Christians" who reject the possibility of dead, decayed bodies ever being restored to life purely on the grounds that it does not seem *reasonable* to them that such a thing could happen. This is a clear example of blasphemously bowing to "reason" instead of to God, since it mocks and rejects what the Lord has said in Holy Scripture. Nevertheless it can be argued (even with a person who is an agnostic), using only reason and logic, that if one conceded the existence of a god that had the power to *create* anything and to *bestow* life upon his creation, then such a god would also have the power to *re-create* from dust and

ashes the decayed bodies of those who long ago died and to restore them to life. But let us never forget that human reason and logic cannot raise a person out of the spiritual death of unbelief (in which all are conceived and born) and work in him a living faith in Jesus as his Savior and Redeemer. No, this can only be accomplished by the power of God working on the heart of man through the Scriptures—the Law convicting him of his sins and utter unworthiness before God, and the Gospel declaring for all mankind forgiveness, peace, and everlasting salvation earned by the perfect, vicarious life, suffering, and death of Christ. By raising Christ from the dead, God the Father confirmed the promises of the Gospel as being absolutely true; and He sealed to us and to all mankind the assurance of reconciliation and of the objective justification, or forgiveness, that He had granted to the entire world in eternity already (Revelation 13:8) for Christ's sake. "[Jesus our Lord] was delivered for [on account of] our offences, and was raised again for [on account of] our justification" (Romans 4:25).

Oh what a tragedy for us and for all mankind if our crucified Lord had remained dead in the grave! We would be "of all men most miserable" (I Corinthians 15:19); for "if Christ be not raised, [our] faith is vain; [we] are yet in [our] sins" (v. 17). "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 57); for "now IS Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (v. 20). Because Jesus rose from the dead, we too shall rise; because He rose from the dead, the promises of the Gospel are true; because He rose from the dead, our faith is not in vain; because He rose from the dead, we do not have hope only in this life but the expectation of eternal life in heaven; because He rose from the dead, we who trust in Him as our Savior are of all men most joyous!

Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands, for our offenses given; but now at God's right hand He stands and brings us life from heaven.

Therefore let us joyful be and sing to God right thankfully loud songs of hallelujah. Hallelujah!

(TLH 195, v. 1)

-P. E. B.

Excerpt on the Second Article from Luther's Large Catechism

Here we learn to know the Second Person of the Godhead, how He has completely poured forth Himself and withheld nothing from us that He has not given us. Now, this article is very rich and broad; but in order to expound it also briefly and in a childlike way we shall take up one word and sum up in that the entire article, namely (as we have said), that we may here learn how we have been redeemed; and we shall base this on these words: In Jesus Christ, our Lord. If now you are asked, What do you believe in the Second Article of Jesus Christ? answer briefly: I believe that Jesus Christ, true Son of God, has become my Lord. But what is it to become Lord? It is this, that He has redeemed me from sin, from the devil, from death, and all evil. For before I had no Lord nor King, but was captive under the power of the devil, condemned to death, enmeshed in sin and blindness.

For when we had been created by God the Father, and had received from Him all manner of good, the devil came and led us into disobedience, sin, death, and all evil, so that we fell under His wrath and displeasure and were doomed to eternal damnation, as we had merited and deserved. There was no counsel, help, or comfort until this only and eternal Son of God in His unfathomable goodness had compassion upon our misery and wretchedness, and came from heaven to help us. Those tyrants and jailers, then, are all expelled now, and in their place has come Jesus Christ, Lord of life, righteousness, every blessing, and salvation, and has delivered us poor lost men from the jaws of hell, has won us, made us free, and brought us again into the favor and grace of the Father, and has taken us as His own property under His shelter and protection, that He may govern us by His righteousness, wisdom, power, life, and blessedness.

Let this, then, be the sum of this article that the little word Lord signifies simply as much as Redeemer, i.e., He who has brought us from Satan to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and who preserves us in the same. But all the points which follow in order in this article serve no other end than to explain and express this redemption, how and whereby it was accomplished, that is, how much it cost Him, and what He spent and risked that He might win us and bring us under His dominion, namely, that He became man, conceived and born without [any stain of] sin, of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary, that He might overcome sin; moreover, that He suffered, died and was buried, that He might make satisfaction for me and pay what I owe, not with silver nor gold, but with His own precious blood. And all this, in order to become my Lord; for He did none of these for Himself, nor had He any need of it. And after that He rose again from the dead, swallowed up and devoured death.

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The Rev. Elison B. Agborubere, Pastor Thompson Compound Abalama Abalama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. CLEMENT'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Elem-Sangama, Nigeria

The Rev. Luckyn Kaladokubo, Pastor

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

The Rev. Onengiye C. Wariboko, Pastor

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL

Abonnema, Nigeria

The Rev. Nimi B. Fyneface and

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

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA





Directory of Member Congregations

www.concordialutheranconf.com

GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

4050 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 171st 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

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

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 Service10:00 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

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

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

59th Annual Conventionof the

Concordia Lutheran Conference

Friday, Saturday and Sunday June 25, 26 and 27, 2010

at

St. John's Lutheran Church Lebanon, Oregon

Motto:

"The Evil of Sinful Separatism"

I John 2:19

The Convention Essay will be delivered by
Pastor Robert J. Lietz
"Sinful Separatism: Satan's Vicious Device
to Destroy the Unity of the Spirit among True Brethren"

The **Keynote Sermon** on I John 2:19 will be preached by Pastor David T. Mensing, Conference President

The **Sunday Sermon** on John 6:60-69 will be preached by Pastor Edward J. Worley

The Pastoral Conference meets on June 22nd & 23rd

The Board of Directors meeting is on June 24th