

*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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“For these things
were done, that
the Scripture
should be fulfilled.”

— John 19:36

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

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 a false church, 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.

To seek out all who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, and to urge the mutual public acknowledgment of such God-given unity. Thus we shall be able thereafter to practice a God-pleasing fellowship with them.

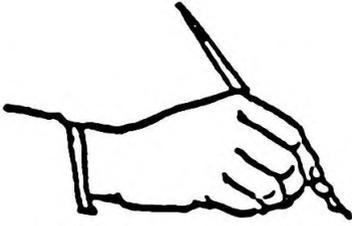
To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

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.

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



The President's Column

That which caused God's wrath to descend upon the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah is, of course, known to every Bible reader. In Genesis, chapter 19, a description of this wrath is very vividly set forth. The vile sin of homosexuality was obviously openly tolerated in those cities and caused the believing Lot much grief of heart. The Apostle Peter writes, "*[God] turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished*" (II Pet. 2:6-9). The Apostle Jude also refers to this manifestation of God's wrath when he writes in verse 7 of his epistle, "*even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*"

A similar situation exists today in these last evil days of the world. Sexual deviance has literally flooded the market place and seeks to sell its abominations wherever it can find buyers. It has been estimated that 45 percent of our population purchases pornographic videos. And who can estimate the number of those who watch the pornography readily available through the Internet. The amount of money taken in by these purveyors of pornography now constitutes a growing \$7 billion-a-year sex industry.

Behind all of this is the devil, the destroyer, who seeks not only to destroy the family, which is the foundation of every civilized society, but also to lead precious blood-bought souls into hell. How sly he has been. Some years ago in our country pornography was confined to private purveyors who were careful not to peddle their wares publicly lest they be arrested. How things have changed. Under the guise of free speech the smut houses began to spring up throughout the length and breadth of our country. The pornographic film industry began to flourish. Now it has even invaded the privacy of the home via TV and the Internet.

There is simply no doubt about it. The pornographic material now on the open market is ultimately destructive to our civilization. Since the current flood of obscene material began in the early 60's, sex crimes have dramatically multiplied. Our news media is replete with the damaging effects of pornography (sexual assaults on boys, girls, women, etc.). It cannot be justifiably denied that pornography contributes to the staggering increase of sex crimes.

The Lord Jesus says that the last evil days of the world will be like the days of Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:28-30). And in our day modesty, chastity and sexual restraints are rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Unless caught up in the stream of an ever-increasing decadence, every wide-awake Christian must surely acknowledge that we are living in those days foretold by the Lord Jesus and His Apostles in Matthew 24 and II Timothy 3:1ff.

We Christians must ever be on our guard lest we be lulled into an attitude of indifference and permissiveness and fail to speak out also against those sins which seek to corrupt and destroy the God-pleasing relationship between husband and wife as described by the Apostle in Ephesians 5:22-33. The Lord did not create us sexless but its fulfillment is to be in marriage which God Himself instituted. "*Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*" (Heb. 13:4). Therefore "*abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*" (I Pet. 2:11).

God Smites the Shepherd and the Flock is Scattered

Zechariah 13:7 and Matthew 26:31

God's inexorable justice is both legislative and punitive. He commands us to be sinless (legislative justice) and if we are not sinless, He does not want us in heaven, but rather condemns us to writhe forever in the torments of hell (punitive justice). He requires us to keep His Holy Law perfectly in every thought, desire, word and deed (legislative justice), and He demands eternal punishment for everything we do, by commission and omission, contrary to His Law, (punitive justice). Of course, by nature (as we are born into this world since the Fall of Adam, Rom. 5:12) there is not one human being who is perfect and holy (Eccl. 7:20; Ps. 14:3; I John 1:8). In fact, from our mother's womb, we are all lost and condemned, ruined in body and soul, so that we are not able to do one single work pleasing to God and our very best works are as filthy rags in God's sight (Ps. 51:5; Is. 64:6). All of us are therefore guilty of violating God's legislative justice! By our sins, however, we also brought upon ourselves the punitive justice of God, namely, the curse of the Law, for the Bible says, "*Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them*" (Gal. 3:10).

Because of God's love (John 3:16) the eternal Son of God became a **true man**, born of the virgin Mary in the fulness of time, that He might take our place under the Law and keep God's Holy Law perfectly in our stead. This is known as Christ's "*active obedience*" by which our Savior **took away our guilt** by satisfying God's *legislative* justice—keeping God's Law perfectly in our place (Rom. 6:18,19).

In order, however, to redeem us also from the Law's curse, namely, from eternal punishment, it was also necessary for the Son of God to become a true man that He, the sinless Son of God, might be able, as our Substitute, to suffer the punishment of hell which we so richly deserve by our sins. This is known as Christ's "*passive obedience*" by

which our Savior satisfied God's *punitive* justice by **suffering our punishment**—sacrificing Himself for us on the accursed tree of the cross, suffering hell's torments in our place when He cried out from the cross: "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?!*"

We, therefore, speak of Christ's entire work of Redemption as a *Vicarious Atonement* or a **substitutional satisfaction** for, by becoming a true man and taking our place under the Law, He completely satisfied God's justice (both legislative and punitive) as **our Substitute**—a perfect Savior indeed! These are things of which we must be fully aware as we approach and continue on into the Lenten Season—that, with deepest reverence and heartfelt gratitude, we may understand and appreciate the holy, innocent, bitter suffering and death of our Savior as it is set forth most vividly in the Passion History (recorded in Scripture by the four Evangelists) which is read in every Lenten service throughout our Conference.

In chapter 13, verse 7, from the pen of the prophet Zechariah, we find an abrupt declaration of God's punitive justice directed against Christ for the sins of the world. The voice of the Lord God is heard crying out: "*Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow! ... Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones!*" Here the Lord of Hosts calls upon **the sword of His divine justice** to "*wake up*" as it were—for it seemed to have been asleep for several thousand years during which the Seed of the woman had not yet come to redeem all people by keeping God's holy Law perfectly in our place and by suffering, as our Substitute, the punishment which all people deserve because of their sins—and thus to satisfy the justice of Him "*[who] so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16).

"*Smite the Shepherd*" refers obviously to the sufferings of Christ in His great Passion which we commemorate during every Lenten Season. Our Savior's suffering was, therefore, **not only** according to the "*determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*" (the will of His good pleasure), as Peter declares in his Pentecostal sermon (Acts 2:23), but also in obedience to the **command** of God's inexorable (inflexible and unbending) justice (His just will) upon Christ our Savior as the Substitute for all people. Thus God, who laid upon Christ the sins of the

whole world (Isaiah 53:6), required Him to be "*wounded for our transgressions*" and "*bruised for our iniquities*" (Isaiah 53:5). "*He hath made Him to be sin for us,*" writes the Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 5:21. Therefore, the Prophet Isaiah again writes concerning Christ that He was "*stricken, smitten of God and afflicted*" (Isaiah 53:4), that "*it pleased the Lord to bruise Him,*" to "*put Him to grief,*" to "*make His soul an offering for sin!*" (Isaiah 53:10) So also the Apostle Paul writes, "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us*" (Galatians 3:13), and that God "*spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all*" (Romans 8:32). How wonderfully these Scriptural truths are expressed in the words of Hymn 153 in *The Lutheran Hymnal*:

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted, See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ by man rejected; Yes, my soul, 'tis He, 'tis He!
'Tis the long-expected Prophet, David's Son, yet David's Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it: 'Tis the true and faithful Word.

Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning, Was there ever grief like His?
Friends thro' fear His cause disowning, Foes insulting His distress;
Many hands were raised to wound Him, None would interpose to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him Was the stroke that Justice gave.

Ye who think of sin but lightly Nor suppose the evil great
Here may view its nature rightly, Here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the Sacrifice appointed, See who bears the awful load;
'Tis the WORD, the LORD'S ANOINTED, Son of Man and Son of God!

Here we have a firm foundation, Here the refuge of the lost;
Christ's the Rock of our salvation, His the name of which we boast.
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded, Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded Who on Him their hope have built.

In the words, "*Smite the Shepherd,*" we see how much the Lord God not only hates sin but also the sinner upon whom He sends the everlasting torments of hell. In our Savior's bitter suffering and death we see the punishment which we deserve because God had laid our sins upon Him.

But Zechariah also writes, "*And the sheep of the flock shall be scattered*" (13:7). These words of the prophet were, of course, directly fulfilled when, in the Garden of Gethsemane, all of the disciples forsook Jesus—fleeing from Him into the night—leaving the Savior to be taken

captive by wicked men and to suffer **all alone** (Isaiah 63:3) at the hands of His enemies. Not only the words of the Prophet Zechariah but also the words of Jesus, with reference to Zechariah's prophecy, spoken to His disciples on His way to the Garden of Gethsemane, were likewise fulfilled for we read in Matthew 26:31, "*Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.*" The Evangelist Mark writes similar words in chapter 14, verse 27.

The hopes and aspirations of the disciples of Christ were shattered—as later expressed by the disciples on the way to Emmaus, "*But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel!*" (Luke 24:21) Judas himself must have thought that Jesus would free Himself from His captors and later establish His Kingdom here on earth. When the Savior had told His disciples very plainly about His impending suffering and death, the Bible says that Peter began to rebuke Him, saying, "*Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee!*" for which Jesus called Peter "*Satan*" and an "*offence [stumbling block] unto Me,*" Matthew 16:23. On another occasion, when Jesus spoke to His disciples about His passion, the Bible says, "*They understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken*" (Luke 18:34). Is it any wonder, then, that on the night of our Savior's betrayal "*all the disciples forsook Him, and fled*"? (Matthew 26:56) The Shepherd was smitten "*and the sheep of the flock*" were "*scattered!*" The fact that their Master, to whom their hopes of a great earthly kingdom were fastened, had been arrested and seemed powerless at the hands of His enemies was an offence to them and they fled from the garden.

Even many people today, who consider themselves Christians, who call upon the name of Jesus and proclaim His love, **stumble** at the Savior's suffering and death in their behalf. They do not want to see in Christ's suffering what they deserve by their sins. They are eager to hear of God's love for them but are offended at the shedding of His blood for them. They cry out, "Away with this BLOOD RELIGION!" and, in this way, they persist in "*denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction*" (II Peter 2:1). The Passion History, which should be the sweetest music to the ears and heart of every true Christian, is despised and is an offence to them and, in this respect, they

are "*ashamed of Jesus.*" They want to be great in the Kingdom of God without being reminded of their sinfulness and wretchedness from their mother's womb and their daily transgression of God's Holy Law in their thoughts, desires, words and actions.

Let this not be so among us but may we, by God's grace, find a special heartfelt joy in every Lenten Service where we, once again, hear of our Savior's bitter suffering and death, and sing with true gratitude in our hearts: "*Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto Thee!*" (T.L.H. 151)

— P.R.B.

“He was numbered
with the transgressors.”

—Isaiah 53:12

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.*” 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. Indeed, when “*with Him they crucified two thieves, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left,*” St. Mark directly connects this 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 recorded in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' great passion] *was done that the Scriptures* [of the Old Testament, penned by inspiration of the Holy Ghost] *might be fulfilled*” con-

cerning 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 24:45-46).

Thus Jesus “*was numbered with the transgressors*” PHYSICALLY and VISIBLY when He was crucified between the two malefactors at that place of execution, “*the place of a skull*” (Matthew 27:33). And it be-gan even **before** His actual crucifixion; for 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 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 added allegations of incitement to tax evasion and treason were completely unfounded (Luke 23:14). Nevertheless, under extreme political pressure, 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).

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, namely, 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”* Christ *“humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* (Philippians 2:8).

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 **LEGALLY**. 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 cries: *“My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death!”* (Matthew 26:38), as His guilt-ridden agony becomes 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).

It is noteworthy that many of the Jews themselves recognized Christ’s sufferings as having been inflicted upon Him by **God Himself** (even though, in their unbelief and blasphemy, they rejected Him as their sinless Redeemer and thus did NOT view His suffering as having been only *IMPUTED* to Him). Isaiah alludes to this in the fourth verse of his 53rd chapter, saying: *“Yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten OF GOD, and afflicted.”* And in fulfillment of this prophecy, we hear the Jews, both before Caiaphas and before Pilate, state that Jesus was *“guilty of death”* and *“ought to die”* because He made Himself the Son of God. Apparently many of them truly believed, in the zeal of their self-imposed ignorance (Acts 3:17), that Jesus had spoken blasphemy and justly deserved the death penalty according to God’s own law (Leviticus 24:16). The Messiah, speaking through David, refers to this misdirected aggression of the Jews, saying: *“I am become a stranger unto My brethren, and an alien unto My mother’s children. For the zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me”* (Psalm 69:8-9).

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”* 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 perfect 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 ACCOMPLISHED FACT! **Why??** Because of the blessed fact that 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 prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. 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 53:10-11).

"We pray you in Christ's stead: Be ye reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:20). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Lord Jesus, we give thanks to Thee
that Thou didst die to set us free!
Made righteous through Thy precious blood,
we now are reconciled to God!

By virtue of Thy wounds, we pray,
true God and Man, be Thou our stay,
our comfort when we yield our breath,
our rescue from eternal death!

(T.L.H. 173, 1-2)

— D.T.M.

**“They part my garments among
them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”**

—Psalm 22:18

Psalm 22, a prophetic Psalm of David, opens with the words, *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*, the same words heard from our suffering Savior as He hung on the cross to pay the debt of mankind’s sins. (Compare with Matthew 27:46.) In verse seven of this Psalm we hear these words: *“a reproach of men, and despised of the people.”* (Compare with Isaiah 53:3.) In verse eight are recorded these words, *“He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.”* (Compare with Matthew 27:35.) In the second part of verse sixteen it is stated, *“they pierced my hands and my feet.”* We find similar words in Matthew 27:35. And then we come to these words of Psalm 22 in verse eighteen, *“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”* Is it mere coincidence that the Psalmist David, in the Old Testament, named events and incidents that happened in the New Testament in connection with our Lord’s suffering and dying on the cross for our sins? David was suffering because of his great distress over his sins, but there is no evidence to suggest that David was pierced in hands and feet or that his enemies cast lots for his clothes. No, David was prophesying events to come. Some of the crude deeds mentioned in this entire Psalm happened with David; those mentioned above were done to Christ, which ties the Old Covenant or Testament to the New Covenant or Testament and proves that *“all Scripture is given by inspiration of God”* (II Timothy 3:16). Let us look more closely at the words in the New Testament that are a fulfillment of David’s words in Psalm 22:18. In John 19:24 we read, *“They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.”* It was the soldiers beneath the cross who did these things, as the same verse also explains. What was this “parting of the raiment and casting of lots”? Verse twenty-three and part of verse twenty-four of chapter nineteen of John state, *“Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be ful-*

filled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots." These last words are also proof that every word of the Bible is inspired by God in that an Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled in the New Testament.

"Casting of lots" was an ancient custom used to determine doubtful questions. Stone or inscribed tablets, or something similar, were put into a vessel or vase and, after much shaking, were drawn out or thrown out. The act was commonly preceded by prayer, and was an appeal to God to decide the matter. In the early history of the Jewish people God was pleased to use the lot as a method of making known His will, so that this weighty statement was made in Proverbs 16:33, "*The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah.*" "The land of Canaan was divided among the twelve tribes by lot (Joshua 14:2; 18:6). On one occasion Saul and Jonathan stood on one side and Jonathan cast lots against the people. The king and his son being thus singled out, they cast lots with each other, Jonathan being finally pointed out by this method of inquiry (1 Samuel 14:40-45). The courses or duties of the priests were settled by lot (1 Chronicles 24:5ff.). And by casting lots after prayer the question was decided whether Joseph Barabbas or Matthias should be Judas Iscariot's successor in the apostleship (Acts 1:15-25). But this method of selection was not repeated by the apostles after the descent of the Holy Spirit." (The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible) The "casting of lots," then, could not be compared to all the sinful gambling that is done today, for "casting of lots" had God's approval. "Casting of lots" was more like shaking of dice, although that is not the best comparison either, because we often associate shaking of dice with the sinful gambling industry. There usually was not lust or greed connected with "casting of lots" as there usually is with gambling. But since "casting of lots" is no longer practiced among us, no further comment is necessary. In the case of our Lord, according to the John text, His outer garments were divided up among the four soldiers; and then His inner garment, which we might compare to "underwear," was subjected to the "casting of lots." This inner garment would be described in Latin as the "tunica" as distinguished from the "toga." Then the question arises, "Why did the soldiers take this action?" or "What did they hope to accomplish?" This was nothing more than a continuation of the blasphemy and mockery of the first Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. What had taken place in the courts of Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate, and on the road to Golgotha, was being

extended. The world's Savior was being humbled and humiliated in the act of taking away the sins of the world and in fulfilling the prophecies. The soldiers certainly did not need Christ's clothes, but, as Luther put it, this was a kind of "rude horseplay" on their part. By dividing Christ's outer garments and "casting lots" over the inner garment, they meant to emphasize that this vile man was dead. Little did they know that this person they were crucifying was the God-Man who in three days would rise from the grave and thereby prove to be the very Savior of the world!

A common focus of the Lenten season is "the redemption of sinful mankind." It could also very well be "the truthfulness of God's Word," for "*Thy Word is Truth*" (John 17:17). The fulfillment of the prophecies confirm that fact!

— D.G.R.

"They shall look on Him
whom they pierced."

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. Zechariah 12:10

33. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. 35. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. 36. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. 37. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced. John 19:33-37

The Apostle John reveals to us in his Gospel the miraculous events surrounding the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ; events that specifically occurred to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. The Scriptures are the greatest gift given by God to the people

of the world. Compared to the Word of God the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars are as nothing. In a day when even religious-sounding men deny the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture, the believers in Christ need only look to their loving Divine Savior to hear His verdict on the written Word of God. The Scriptures are absolutely true, for Jesus assures us they **“cannot be broken”** (John 10:35b). The revealed Scriptures are God’s **“truth”** that alone possess the power to **“sanctify”** the believing child of God (John 17:17). Heaven and earth shall pass away but the smallest part of God’s revealed Word will not pass away until **“all be fulfilled”** (Matt. 5:17,18).

In John’s Gospel we see our Lord as He hung on the cross as the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrificial lamb. He was the **“Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world”** (John 1:29). The New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old, and the Holy Spirit opened the minds of the inspired writers of the New Testament to understand the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Old Testament (Luke 24:45). Peter reveals how the Old Testament prophets **“enquired and searched diligently”** concerning the things that were being revealed unto them by God (I Pet. 1:10-12). These writers **“prophesied of the grace that should come unto you”** yet they did not understand all that they were being shown. The Old Testament writers and Patriarchs longed to know the things that have been revealed unto us and how blessed we are to know them by His Grace.

The Old Testament is a revelation of the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the road to Emmaus our Lord spoke with the two discouraged disciples as they walked along together. Jesus gave these fortunate men an extraordinary exposition of the doctrine of Christ in the Old Testament. **“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself”** (Luke 24:27). Can you imagine the glorious privilege of having the Risen Lord Jesus Christ personally expound for you the very Scriptures that the Spirit of God inspired to be written? These men no doubt rejoiced over those words in their hearts for the rest of their lives. Later in the day Jesus said to the disciples in the upper room as they looked upon Him with joy and wonder: **“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”** (v. 44). Jesus fulfilled the things written of Him in the Scriptures, for the prophecies must be ful-

filled; God's Word can never fall to the ground unfulfilled and broken.

As the Apostle John stood by the cross of Jesus that first Good Friday, he heard our Lord say, **"It is finished."** Redemption was now complete, the payment had been made for the sins of mankind, and knowing this Jesus **"bowed his head and gave up the ghost"** (John 19:30). Jesus had truly died upon the cross; therefore He had atoned for the sins of mankind, and His true bodily resurrection in three days confirmed it. The religious Jews, desiring to be done with His crucifixion and death before the High Sabbath Day, requested that Pilate instruct his soldiers to hasten the death of Jesus along with the two malefactors. When they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, **"one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water"** (v. 34). There could now be no doubt that Jesus was truly dead, and John was a witness.

It was revealed to John that this Roman Soldier in following his orders to finish the execution of Jesus and piercing His side with a spear had fulfilled the words of the Prophet Zechariah. God had promised the people of Israel through Zechariah that one day He would pour out His mercy and strength upon the nation. In preparation for this mercy and as a pledge of it He promised to pour out upon them a spirit of prayer and repentance. The Prophet predicted that the House of David would receive **"the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son"** (Zech 12:10). One day the Jews, by the help of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Word of God, would be enabled to look upon the Divine Son of God whom they had put to death by the hands of the Roman government and realize the wicked thing they had done. The grace of God would cause the elect of Israel to be brought to godly sorrow and repentance for this grievous sin, and thus be converted.

On the Day of Pentecost, as Peter preached to the many Jews gathered at Jerusalem from all over the world, he stood before his hearers and personally indicted them for the sin of putting Christ Jesus to death. Peter, under the power of the Holy Spirit, thundered in the ears of these Jews with the Law of God saying, **"ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"** the very Son of God (Acts 2:23). He concluded his sermon with the words: **"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom**

ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). As Peter laid before the Jews their grievous sins against God, Luke tells us, **“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”** (Acts 2:37). The powerful words of Peter laid before these Jews the Lord Jesus Christ, who hung on the cross for their sins, and they were thereby also made to **“look on him whom they pierced.”** The words of Zechariah were fulfilled, for these Jews were granted godly sorrow that leads to repentance (II Cor. 7:10).

Peter now proclaimed unto these penitent hearers the blessed promises of the Gospel, and that by Baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ God would be merciful to them and forgive their many sins, granting them the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). They would now possess the blessings of the New Covenant prophesied by Zechariah and the entire Old Testament. Luke tells us that those who heard Peter preach that day **“gladly received his word and were baptized”** (v. 41). These Jews were the first fruits of the many throughout history who would look upon the Lord Jesus Christ through the hearing of His Word and be saved.

God still invites men and women through His Word to look upon Christ in faith for forgiveness. Isaiah wrote, **“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else”** (Is. 45:22). Those who look upon Him in this life by faith receive the blessings of forgiveness and salvation offered to them, but those who refuse to believe will look upon Him one day in terror. One day Christ shall return to judge the world and men will once again look upon the Son of God whom they put to death. In Revelation 1:7 we read, **“Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”** The horror and terror of the Day of Judgment for those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ is beyond comprehension. Paul said in light of the coming judgment, **“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men”** (II Cor. 5:11). In light of the Day of Judgment, let us also persuade men of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and may God grant each of us the eye of faith to look upon Christ by faith and be saved. Amen.

— R.A.M.

“Thou Wilt Not Leave My Soul In Hell.”

Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27, 31

This is the last in our series of articles in this special Lenten issue which has as its theme *Lenten Prophecies and Fulfillment*. Each of the previous articles has set forth an Old Testament prophecy and a New Testament passage of fulfillment on one particular facet of Christ's Passion. As our Savior's Passion was followed by His Triumphant Resurrection on Easter morn, it is obvious as to why we have selected the prophecy and fulfillment passages of Psalm 16:10 and Acts 2:27, 31 for this last article.

Although the previous articles have already made a point of emphasizing the significance of Scripture's prophecies and fulfillment, we cannot refrain from reiterating, especially in view of the times, how the veracity and authority of Scripture are plainly confirmed by each prophecy and fulfillment. We have as the Apostle Peter states, *“a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed”* (II Peter 1:19). Let all mockers and scoffers say what they will, *“the Scripture cannot be broken”* (John 10:35). *“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever”* (Isaiah 40:8). Amen, and Amen!

Let us now delve into how our Savior's burial and resurrection were prophesied by David in Psalm 16, and then see how Peter in his Pentecost sermon in Acts 2 interprets this Messianic Psalm. Indeed, Psalm 16 is throughout Messianic, that is, the entire Psalm, not just a verse or two, is Christ Himself speaking through David. It is Christ expressing beforehand His feelings of hope in His sufferings in His State of Humiliation, and also His joy and pleasure in view of His triumphant resurrection in His State of Exaltation. As the Messiah says, *“Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope”* (v. 9). His flesh, His true human body, although crucified and buried, did rest in hope, in the sure hope of His own resurrection, a resurrection which Scripture attributed not only to the power and glory of the Father (*“whom God hath raised up,”* Acts 2:24), but also to the Son Himself who said, *“because I lay down my life, that I might take it again”* (John 10:17).

Having declared that His flesh did therefore rest in hope, Christ through David states, *“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.”* Is *hell* in this

passage to be taken as the place of the damned? Some feel an obligation to say "yes." The answer is "No!" The Hebrew word which our KJV translates as hell is *sheol*. In addition to the fact that in most cases in the Old Testament *sheol* refers to the grave or the state of death, the context of Psalm 16 and the doctrine of the two States of Christ, His Humiliation and His Exaltation, must be observed. Textually, that is, in the Psalm itself, we are to observe the typical Hebrew parallelism where the first half of a verse and the second half state the same truth but from opposite directions. Hence, after Christ says, "*For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,*" He then adds, "*neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*" Thus, in both halves of the verse, the grave and the state of death are being referred to.

Secondly, in this section of the Psalm, Christ has already spoken of the blessed hope in which His body rests in the grave. Thus, hell as the place of the damned is no longer an issue at this point. On the cross, before He died, Christ did indeed suffer hell, the place of the damned. As He cried, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*", Christ was briefly abandoned to the torments of hell in our stead. Yet when He cried, "*It is finished,*" all suffering and all punishment ceased. That all suffering and punishment-bearing was over is further confirmed by the fact that Christ committed His true human soul into the hands of the Father — "*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*" (Luke 23:46). Thus, at His burial, Christ's true human soul was already in the hands of the Father. That it was separated from the body means that Christ was still dead, but His soul would not remain separated from the body. His soul would not be left in *sheol*, in the state of death (the soul being separated from the body), but would return to the body in the grave. Indeed, Christ came alive in the grave! Then hell in the sense of the damned became an issue again, yet not in regard to punishment (punishment is over), but in regard to victory. Vivified in the grave, with body and soul reunited, Christ, now in the State of Exaltation, descended into hell to proclaim His victory over the damned. Therefore, even this descent into hell is also not considered when the text refers to *sheol*. In short, hell, as the place of the damned, is not at all treated when the Psalm says, "*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.*" The Psalm has to do with Christ entering death, then to be buried, and then to be raised again.

However, while in the grave, Christ's body did not suffer decomposition or putrefaction. Through David Christ says, "*neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*" Because Christ is the Holy One, the sinless Son of God, He "*who did no sin, neither was guile*

found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:22), His body never experienced personal sin. Yes, He bore our sins on the cross, our sin was imputed to Him, but He never was guilty of sin of His own. For this reason His body did not undergo what the bodies of all sinners undergo, namely, corruption or putrefaction. Christ's true human body, although dead, remained uncorrupted. This is the unique experience of the Son of God alone. This is why, as we shall consider in a moment, Peter in Acts 2 says this Psalm cannot refer to David.

Let us now turn to Acts 2:27 and 31. In His great Pentecost sermon, Peter was proclaiming to the Jews the truth of Christ. In so doing, he referred his hearers back to one of the Psalms of their beloved David. We know he referred them to Psalm 16 in that his words are a direct quote from this Psalm. He says, "*Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption*" (v. 27). Here again, for the same reasons as given above, the word hell (*hades* in the Greek) in this context is the state of death. Peter quotes this Psalm to inform the Jews that Jesus whom they crucified is the very Messiah who has risen from the dead and is now exalted to the right hand of the Father. Yet lest any of the Jews think that in Psalm 16 David was referring to himself, Peter says in Acts 2:29-31, "**Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.**" Thus, Peter, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, confirms that Christ who was crucified, dead and buried, did not remain in death, and that His resurrection was the fulfillment of David's Psalm which specifically foretold of Christ's resurrection.

Now then, what should all this mean for our own spiritual welfare? We should rejoice that what Christ accomplished in His death, burial and resurrection He accomplished for the whole world. Christ earned the justification of all mankind. "*Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification*" (Romans 4:25). Yet how only does this really mean anything to us unless we consider where we would stand without this justifying work of Christ? We are in Adam's Fall sinners in body and soul. The proof is that we will die ("*for the wages of sin is death*"), and when we die, our bodies will suffer corruption. They will decompose and go back to the dust, "*for dust thou art,*

and unto dust shalt thou return." Every person's death is a testimony that *"all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). Therefore, by our sins we justly deserve to suffer the eternal torments of hell. It is the just punishment of God. Without Christ, we all would be damned. That is where most of mankind has already gone, and where most of those living today are headed.

Yet because of Christ, no one has to go to hell. Contrary to Calvinism, no one was or ever has been predestined, not even Judas, to eternal wrath. God Himself said through the prophet Ezekiel, *"I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live"* (Ezekiel 33:11). Why is this God's disposition toward sinners who fully deserve His eternal wrath? It is because of His only-begotten Son, Christ the Holy One, the Messiah, the Anointed of God, who out of love for all sinners came to take the place of all sinners. He placed Himself under the Law we broke and in our stead kept that Law perfectly (Active Obedience), and also on the cross in our stead suffered the penalty (Passive Obedience) due upon all who break the Law, both temporal and eternal death. This won the justification of the whole world (Romans 5:18). This was confirmed by God Himself when He raised up Christ on Easter morning. Yes, the holy justice of the Father was satisfied. *"He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied"* (Isaiah 53:11). Thus, not only was Christ delivered for our offences, but was also raised again for our justification.

And, thanks to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, we have this victory for ourselves by faith. As we see our sins and know we shall go to our own grave, we rejoice that Christ conquered sin and death for us. Because Christ rose from the dead, just as He foretold through David, we through faith in Him our Risen Savior have the sure hope of our own resurrection to eternal life on the Last Day. *"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"* (John 11:25-26). Yes, we will die, and yes, our bodies will suffer corruption. Nevertheless, on the Last Day, our vile bodies will be raised and instantaneously changed into glorified bodies. *"For this corruptible must put on incorruption"* (I Cor. 15:53). In fact, our bodies will then be just like Christ's own glorious body (Phil. 3:21). Indeed, *"we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure"* (I John 3:2). All this is based on the sure Word of the Lord, both prophecy and fulfillment.

— E.R.S.