




"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.

Vol. LXIII

May—June 2019

Nos. 5-6



"We do hear
them speak
in our tongues..."

—Acts 2:11





Vol. LXIII May-June 2019 Nos. 5-6

Official Organ of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference

This publication appears in a bi-monthly issue at a subscription price of \$10.00 per year.

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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.

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.

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The Ascension of Christ as the Expression of the Omnipresence of His Human Nature

“He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things”

—Ephesians 4:10

The Biblical fact that the incarnate, crucified, risen, and ascended Lord Jesus Christ is present everywhere, “all-present” (*omnipresent*) not only in His *Divine* Nature, as True God, but also in His assumed *Human* Nature, as true man, will be demonstrated in this article as the Bible texts pertinent to the subject clearly declare it. In particular, our title-text, Ephesians 4:10, will be presented in context to declare what it so clearly states, namely, that the ascension of Christ to heaven and, more specifically, as stated, “*far above all heavens*” to God’s right hand, is a continuous expression of His omnipresence: “*that He might fill all things.*”

Consider the divine attribute of *omnipresence* in the general context of the

essence of the only true God, as revealed to the human race in God's own words, the Holy Scriptures. At the very outset it must be understood that the only true God is *an infinite spirit* (John 4:24), the "supreme being" unlimited and beyond category (class), the completely independent source of all that is beyond Himself (Father, Son and Holy Ghost) (cf. Acts 17:28), the self-revealed "*I AM that I AM*" (Exodus 3:14) — the only God that truly *IS*, that truly *exists*. All that we know of Him is the result of what He has given us, including both the so-called "*natural* knowledge of God" (Hebrews 3:4; Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:19-20), and the only, special and perfectly clear, "*revealed* knowledge of God" — God's very own Word, Holy Scripture (Isaiah 42:8; Jeremiah 10:10; John 17:3; cf. Acts 17:23-24). For although Adam and Eve had the true knowledge of God, as part of the concreated image of God, when they fell into sin that knowledge was almost totally lost; and what they did retain became blurred and utterly subject to the blindness, opposition and perversion of their carnal mind (Genesis 1:26-27, 5:3; Colossians 3:10; I Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1; Romans 8:7). God, in His great mercy and grace, gave our first parents the enlightenment of the Gospel, converting them to faith in the promised Savior and making a beginning of the renewal of God's image within them in their new nature (Genesis 3:15; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10) by the revelation of His Spirit, by the Spirit-inspired Word of God (cf. I Corinthians 2:9-13, 15-16), "*which liveth and abideth forever*" (I Peter 1:23).

In His Word, the only true God, *Jehovah*, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, one Essence in three distinct Persons, undivided and indivisible, the sublime Holy Trinity, reveals His attributes or characteristics to us. These transcendent qualities are declared to us that we might, as much as possible in our present "unfinished" condition (before our glorification following our resurrection from the dead, cf. I Corinthians 13:12) "understand" and worship Him in childlike humility and awe, in Godly fear and trembling before His awesome revelation to us (Isaiah 66:2, 8:13; Psalm 4:4, 33:8, 89:7, *et al.*)!

This God-wrought faith is necessary when we consider that God's Word alone gives us the knowledge of the true doctrine (I Timothy 3:16-17) and that His Word must be strictly adhered to so that we bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5), speaking only "*the form of sound words*" that God's Word dictates (II Timothy 1:13; I Peter 4:11a). To attempt to approach such supernatural, spiritual matters *apart from* God's Word is not only sinful but doomed to failure from the very outset. Sinners cannot "find out" God directly without divine revelation (I Corinthians 2:14). "[*God*] only

hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (I Timothy 6:16a).

So, with the proper, God-wrought, mind which is ever bound to God's Word in all our thoughts, we consider what is revealed to us about the divine attribute of *omnipresence*. God is *everywhere* and also "*beyond* where," that is, beyond the creature we call "space." Space contains all created things. But God is not limited to or by space, for God is not "containable." He is limitless and infinite as the *Uncreated*, the *Infinite* Spirit! Wow! I was once asked by a young man "How *big* is God?" The question is not correct in and of itself. Why? The term "*big*" is a relative term, a limiting term that does not apply to an *unlimited* being: God is *infinite*. The signature catch phrase of Buzz Lightyear (in *Toy Story*), "To infinity and beyond," is so laughable because it is so obviously self-contradictory, a simple fact to which our "hero," Buzz, remains completely oblivious!

The preceding discussion is, of course, only foundational, preparatory in setting our minds and hearts with respect to concepts and terminology on **solid Scriptural ground**. But we must now consider the attribute of God's *omnipresence* in application to **the human nature of Christ** and as it is manifested by **His ascension** to God's right hand.

How did the human nature of Jesus Christ receive a *divine* attribute, *any* divine attribute? Scripture reveals that, when the Son of God assumed His newly-created human nature at His incarnation in the Virgin Mary, a simultaneous *communication of attributes* occurred: **All** the divine attributes, including the three great "omnis" (*omnipotence*, *omniscience* and, yes, *omnipresence*) were communicated to the human nature. Scripture declares this fact in these express words: "*And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14). "*For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*" (Colossians 2:9). The scope of this article does not permit a listing of all the passages that pertain to the specific divine attributes communicated to the human nature at conception. The reader is directed to Section 97 of *Outlines of Doctrinal Theology* by Dr. A. L. Graebner for further study as the author provides an excellent summary listing of pertinent proof passages. We do mention the following passages because they directly speak of communicated ***omnipresence***: "*the Son of man...is in heaven*" (John 3:13); "*there am I in the midst of them*" (Matthew 18:20); "*I am with you alway*" (Matthew 28:20); "*everywhere, the Lord working with them*" (Mark 16:20).

Our title-text declares this truth in express words, namely, that the human nature has and expresses *communicated omnipresence* in that “*He ascended up far above all heavens*” (*i.e.* to God’s right hand of majesty, power and dominion), “*that He might fill all things*” (Ephesians 4:10). Above the entire creation, Christ, **also according to His assumed human nature**, *fills* the whole universe! The Holy Ghost said virtually the same thing in Ephesians 1:23: “*Him that filleth all in all.*” The Person of the God-Man *fills* the entire universe, the complete “space-time continuum” of matter! The *repletive* [*full*; capable of *filling*] presence of the Son of God is clearly and forcefully predicated to His **human nature** by these two texts! At God’s right hand, the active Lordship of Christ the King is conducted throughout the entire universe, so that in His repletive presence He rules all creatures not only in His divine nature but also as True Man in His human nature!

A selection from the Catalog of Testimonies in the *Concordia Triglotta* IX, p. 1145, records: “[The Son of God] indeed long ago filled all things with His bare deity [*i.e.* from the creation of ‘things,’ Genesis 1:1 – E.J.W.), and having become incarnate, that He might fill all things with His flesh, He descended and ascended.” This is God’s way! The Prophet Jeremiah records the fact in God’s own testimony to sinners: “‘*Am I a God at hand,*’ saith the Lord, ‘*and not a God afar off?*’ Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?’ saith the Lord. ‘*Do not I fill heaven and earth?*’ saith the Lord” (23:23-24).

The operative *omnipresence* of Christ, according to His human nature, is clearly declared in our title-text (and also in Ephesians 1:20-23): He *fills* the universe (the world and the Church)! Mark well: The Ascension is the culmination of all His saving work and an active omnipresent reign for the sake of His Church: “(Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things)” (Ephesians 4:9-10). He “*descended first.*” The Son of God came down from heaven and assumed a true human nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary. His incarnation had one purpose: to save mankind from their sins (Matthew 1:21). He died to pay the price (I Peter 1:18-19; I Corinthians 6:20). He gave Himself as the full atoning sacrifice (I John 2:2). “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*” (I Timothy 1:15)! “*We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,*” by His active and passive obedience in our place, “*we shall be saved*” (Acts 15:11) from the wrath to come! Scripture clearly teaches that “[He] was made a little lower than the

angels,” that is, made true man, “*that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man*” (Hebrews 2:9).

Scripture speaks of the conception and growth of a human being in Psalm 139 on this wise: “*My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth*” (v. 15). The Son of God descended to “*the lowest parts of the earth*” when the Holy Ghost brought Mary to conception and the Son of God assumed the human nature into His Divine Person to become the God-Man. He was conceived and born sinless to manifest Himself as “*the Son of God*” (Luke 1:35) and by His righteousness to gain for us righteousness before God (Romans 5:18). He was “*made of a woman, made under the Law*” (Galatians 4:4) to do all that was necessary in our stead to fulfill the Law and to suffer and die to pay for our sins against the Law (v. 5). On Ascension Day we should soberly contemplate also His “Decension” Day — the day of His incarnation to be our Redeemer!

On Ascension Day we remember and celebrate the historical event that occurred forty days after Easter Sunday, the glorious Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Ascension of Christ took place visibly while our Savior was pronouncing a blessing upon His disciples on the Mount of Olives. Christ ascended “*while they beheld*” (Acts 1:9) in order that the truth of the Ascension might be historically established by proper witness for the disciples and for the whole Christian Church. His Ascension was the gradual upward movement of His body from the earth until “*a cloud received him out of their sight*” (Acts 1:9). It pleased Him gradually to go upward in order that His disciples might see and testify of His actual Ascension the more clearly and confidently.

Christ ascended visibly into heaven before the very eyes of His disciples in order that He might, in an impressive way, remove His visible presence from them. He could have simply *disappeared*, as He had “*vanished*” from the sight of the disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24:31). But by His Ascension, Jesus made it clear to His disciples that they would no longer see Him (John 16:16, 28); that He would no longer walk with them, eat with them, or speak with them; that henceforth they were to walk “*by faith and not by sight*” (II Corinthians 5:7); that His Kingdom would not be an earthly kingdom (John 18:26); and yet that He, in the context of the Great Commission, would, in a closer and more majestic way, be “*with them alway even unto the end of the world*” (Matthew 28:20; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:18; Acts 9:4), the very same “*I*,” the same “*I Myself*” who showed them His hands and His feet after His resurrection (Luke 24:39). Thus Christ did not with-

draw His *presence* from the disciples then and now, but merely the visible *manifestation* thereof.

According to His human nature Christ ascended up on high. He ascended to heaven, the paradise of the elect (Matthew 24:31; 25:34; II Timothy 2:10), where all true believers will dwell with Him forever. This is the place our Savior promised the penitent thief (Luke 23:43), the place to which the Apostle Paul desired to depart in order “*to be with Christ*” (Philippians 1:23). Our Lord went to prepare a place for us, as our Forerunner: “*In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also*” (John 14:2-3). Our hope of paradise is sure and certain: “*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec*” (Hebrews 6:19-20). As our Advocate with the Father, our High Priest continually makes intercession for us before God, “*who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*” (Romans 8:34c). Christ ascended, not only to “*paradise*” (Luke 23:43), the *place*, but also to “*the right hand of God,*” the *status* to which He was “*exalted*” after having mightily and fully completed His redemptive work (Mark 16:19; Philippians 2:9).

Note that the term “*right hand*” is an *anthropomorphism* (a figure of speech which describes God as having human attributes) which signifies power and might. Christ “*was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God*” (Mark 16:19), designating the unending dominion, also according to His human nature, upon which Christ entered by His ascension into heaven, so that now He always and fully uses all the divine attributes which were communicated to His human nature when He was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary. God’s “*right hand*” thus refers to His unlimited omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. What great comfort it is to know that Christ rules as our King over the entire universe.

We should also dwell on the fact that the Ascension means that Christ always and fully exercises omnipotent rule over the entire universe *for the sake of His elect, the Church*. He actively rules at God’s right hand, omnipresently filling all things as Lord over all; and He does so for the benefit of His mystical body, the Church (Ephesians 1:19-23).

The *Formula of Concord* rightly declares on the basis of Scripture that Christ, after ascending far above all heavens, that is, to God’s right hand, “not only as

God, but also as man has dominion and rules from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth; as the prophets predict, Psalm 8:1, 6; 93:1ff.; Zechariah 9:10; and the apostles testify, Mark 16:20, that He everywhere wrought with them and confirmed their word with signs following” (*Concordia Triglotta, Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration*, VIII, §27, p. 1025). As the orthodox Lutheran theologian, David Hollaz (1648-1713), rightly describes: “The sitting at the right hand of God is the highest degree of glory, in which Christ, the God Man, having been exalted according to His human nature to the throne of divine majesty, most powerfully and by His immediate presence governs all things which are in the Kingdoms of Power, Grace and Glory, to the glory of His own name and for the solace and safety of the afflicted Church” (*Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum, “De exalt.”* qu. 154).

The *Formula of Concord* also stresses the practical benefit of this doctrine in these words: “We hold...that in His Church and congregation on earth [Christ] is present as Mediator, Head, King, and High Priest, not in part, or one-half of Him only, but the entire person of Christ is present, to which both natures belong, the divine and human; not only according to His divinity, but also according to, and with, His assumed human nature, according to which He is our Brother, and we are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone.” (*Concordia Triglotta, Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration*, VIII, §78, p. 1043). He, who is not ashamed to call us His brethren (Hebrews 2:11) omnipresently rules for the sake of us, His brethren! He works all things together for the good of His own (Romans 8:28)! Scripture teaches that in Him, in whom “*dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*,” we find also the one who “*is the head of all principality and power*” (Colossians 2:9-10).

In the Ascension we celebrate the comforting truth that Christ is in full control of our salvation as the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2), who not only begins but shall perform it unto the end. We cast all our care upon Him who ever cares for us and faithfully rules the entire universe for our eternal benefit. He is *for* us — who can be *against* us? (Romans 8:31). He will see to it that nothing in all the universe shall be able to separate us from God’s love in Him! (8:35). Our Savior, the Lord God omnipotent, reigneth! (Revelation 19:6).

The Ascension of Christ is a clear expression of the omnipresence of His human nature for our sake! May the comfort of Christ’s victorious and glorious Ascension be and remain with you unto life everlasting, even as your Savior abides with you omnipresently also according to His assumed human nature!

— E. J. W.



Is the Bible in Translation Still the Authoritative and Efficacious Word of God?

*“We do hear them speak in our tongues
the wonderful works of God.” —Acts 2:11*

From the time of Adam and Eve “*in the beginning*” (Genesis 1:1) until the time of Moses — approximately 2,500 years later according to genealogical reckoning — God made Himself known to man by **word of mouth**, by direct oral communication from Himself to individual people (like Cain, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Hagar, Lot, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob) in intelligible human speech. Before the time of Abraham, we do not know *what* language was spoken, though we do know that, at the time of the Tower of Babel, “*the whole earth was of one language and of one speech*” (Genesis 11:1) until God Himself saw fit to “*confound*” it into many (v. 9) and to scatter men abroad in the earth. Many of these conversations, though presumably not every one of them, are recorded “*for our learning*” in the Holy **Scriptures** or *sacred written record* (Romans 15:4).

When God **spoke** to Abraham, a descendant of *Eber* (after whom the *Hebrew* language is presumably named) and to his descendants after him, God's chosen people — promised to be the ancestors of the Messiah, the people were called "*the children of Israel*" according to their ancestry from Jacob (Genesis 32:32; 36:31; 45:21; 46:8; 50:25; Exodus 1:1, 7, 9; 12, 13; 2:23-25) or simply "*Israel*" (Exodus 3:16a, 18; 5:1-2; 11:7; 12:15, 21; etc.) and also "*the Hebrews*" according to **their common language** (Genesis 40:15; 43:32; Exodus 2:6, 13; 3:18; 5:3; 7:16; 9:1; etc.). It was in *this language* that God continued to **speak** to His people, not directly any longer in most cases after the time of Moses and Joshua but more and more frequently through the mouths of "*His holy prophets*" (Luke 1:68-75; cf. Hebrews 1:1), who declared to His people: "*Thus saith the Lord...*". Thus, as regularly and as consistently "*as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven*" (Isaiah 55:10a), God's Word continued to *go forth out of His mouth* (v. 11), inerrantly, authoritatively, clearly and efficaciously as it was proclaimed by His prophets, as those "*holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*" (II Peter 1:21).

It was also the **Hebrew** language in which God purposed to have **recorded in writing** the things concerning Himself, His will, His ordinances, the requirements of His justice, and the knowledge of His mercy and grace to the children of men in and through the Messiah, the things which had gone forth out of His mouth in the "*foolishness of preaching*" (I Corinthians 1:21) through His divinely-ordained spokesmen. The "*holy men of God*" (II Peter 1:21) whom He chose for this work were "*Moses and the prophets*" (Luke 16:29) — Moses being the *Lawgiver* (John 1:17) who penned the first five books of the Old Testament, also known as "*the Law*" [the *Torah*], and *the prophets* who by definition looked ahead into the future and proclaimed (and wrote) what God revealed to them, especially the good-news prophecies of the Savior to come.

The original autographs — the manuscripts personally penned by the "*holy men of God*" — were "*given by inspiration of God*" (II Timothy 3:16) as "God the Holy Ghost moved the holy men to write and put into their minds the very thoughts which they expressed and the very word which they wrote" (*Catechism* Q/A 10); and God providentially made sure that the **Old Testament Scriptures** in **Hebrew**, committed to the Jews, to their advantage as to stewards or caretakers (Romans 3:1-2), were meticulously copied and preserved, "*jot*" for "*jot*" and "*tittle*" for "*tittle*" — from the smallest letter to even part of a letter— so that there

could be no question that they would remain inviolate “*till heaven and earth pass ...till all be fulfilled*” (Matthew 5:18), even though the original penmen had long-since died and gone to heaven.

We know of no *translation* from the Hebrew into any other language being made, nor authorized as accurate, until the *Septuagint* (abbreviated *LXX* = 70) in **Greek** was meticulously prepared by seventy-two scribes over seventy-two days in about 200 B. C. This was done because many Jews, following their return from the Babylonian captivity, had settled in places other than Judea, namely, in Egypt and elsewhere where **Greek** was the common everyday language due to the conquests and influence of Alexander the Great; and many Jews who had lost contact with and fluency in the ancient Hebrew language still wanted access to the Holy Scriptures. The *Septuagint* was widely regarded as being pristinely accurate, and it was in widespread use at the time of Jesus’ public ministry here on earth. In fact, many scholars who have carefully examined the texts hold that Jesus and the apostles occasionally quoted the Old Testament from the *Septuagint* instead of from the original Hebrew.

The “*Holy Scriptures*” of the **New** Testament, also “*given by inspiration of God*” (II Timothy 3:16; cf. I Corinthians 2:13; 14:37; etc.), were collected in **Greek** manuscripts, the *Koine* (“common”) dialect of which was in use in eastern Mediterranean lands since the time of Alexander the Great and well into the sixth century A. D. in the Roman Empire. It is indeed significant that *Koine* Greek was then, in a very literal sense, the “world language” of the time, spoken and understood by practically **everyone** in the known world as far as it had been explored and civilized. We teach on the basis of Scripture that, in spite of the wide variety of Greek manuscripts in existence today, all of which have been carefully examined as to their integrity and accuracy, God has preserved to this very day His Holy Word in its pristine, original integrity, the Word on which we can and must rely as the only source and norm of Christian doctrine and practice (Ephesians 2:20). We of course reject any and all ancient “original” language manuscripts which betray heretical bias and manipulation evident already in post- New Testament times, as well as the modern “higher textual criticism” common after Luther’s Reformation — the systematic rationalistic and deliberate attempt to undermine and destroy the integrity and authority of Scripture. Moreover, in spite of so-called “variant readings” even in the so-called “Majority” texts, the reliable texts, variants which affect not one doctrine of

Holy Writ, we have still today the ***Holy Scriptures*** in their truth and purity, the inerrant, authoritative and efficacious “*incorruptible seed*” of “*the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever*” (I Peter 1:23; cf. John 17:17 and 20; Romans 10:17; Matthew 24:14; etc.), providentially preserved to us **in writing**, in their full integrity. Not to have THAT assurance would certainly put our faith on the quicksand of uncertainty and unbelief (Cf. Matthew 7:26 and 27)!

Aside, however, from controversies about the *integrity* of certain **manuscripts** — controversies in which the average Christian is unable to engage in any detail because he is unacquainted with the original languages and is not fluent in their use — and in spite of the providential gift of God in **modern printing** (since 1455 A.D.) so that everyone, for very little money, can have in his own hands a copy of the entire Holy Scriptures, instead of having to spend hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions, of dollars to purchase even one book of the Bible as a hand-copied scroll, we have **still today** the “*foolishness of preaching*” as the primary means of propagating God’s Word to the saving of men’s souls. The Lord Jesus declared: “*Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it*” (Luke 11:28); and the rich man in hell was told concerning the potential salvation of his five brothers from the same fate: “*They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them*” (Luke 16:29). And so St. Paul writes by inspiration of God: “*How shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written [in Isaiah 52:7], ‘How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!’ ...so then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*” (Romans 10:14-15, 17). **What** is to be preached? God Himself says through His prophet Jeremiah: “*He that hath My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully*” (Jeremiah 23:28b); St. Paul instructs Timothy: “*Preach the Word!*” (II Timothy 4:2); and the Savior validates the faithful preaching of His Word, saying to His mouthpieces: “*He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me*” (Luke 10:16).

Despite the inspired record of the apostles’ preaching on the **Day of Pentecost** (which we celebrate this year on June 9th), speaking “*with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance*” (Acts 2:4), that is, in “foreign” languages that they had never studied or learned, so that their

hearers could joyfully exclaim: “*How hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?... We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God!*” (vv. 8, 11). we often hear today the challenge set before us in the title of our article: **Is the Bible in translation still the authoritative and efficacious Word of God?**

We of course reject the teaching that God the Holy Ghost verbally inspired any particular *translation* of the Scriptures. Why? Simply because we have no Word of God either to establish or to back up such a claim; neither do we have the right to *speculate* upon what we *might think* to be a comforting and reassuring idea, were it even possible. The doctrine of *verbal inspiration* is established by Scripture itself, **ONLY** with regard to the words spoken and penned by the “*holy men of God*” (II Peter 1:21) in “*old time*,” in the Old Testament, and by the apostles and evangelists in the New Testament (I Corinthians 2:13), in their original autographs [self-writings].

Any *translation* of the Scriptures into a “target language,” simply as an intellectual exercise of those who are “*wise in [their] own conceits*” (Romans 12:16) and skew and manipulate it according to their perverted human reason supposedly to “clarify” it and to make it “more understandable,” will in so doing do more harm than good by their efforts. Such translators are just as guilty as “*They that are unlearned and unstable [who] wrest [twist, manipulate], as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction*” (II Peter 3:16). But if a translation is undertaken with the full knowledge, belief and expectation that the original words were written at the behest of and by inspiration of the Holy Ghost for the conversion, edification and ultimate salvation *also* of precious souls who are not conversant in Hebrew or Greek, such translation is still only as good and profitable as the *accuracy* of the translation from the original languages, ***Scripture being its own interpreter*** when questions arise as to the proper rendering of a word or phrase. And one of the best **tests** of such a translation is not merely the *lexical* (dictionary) and *syntactical* (grammatical) proficiency of the “expert” linguist, but as Luther stresses in his open letter about translation (October 8, 1530): “Translating is not an art that everyone can practice, as the mad saints think; it requires a right pious, faithful, diligent, God-fearing, experienced, practiced heart. Therefore I hold that no false Christian, or sectarian, can be a faithful translator,” that is, one who consistently holds fast to the pure teachings of God’s Word in his work. Sadly many of the translations available (and popular) today bear

the marks of *rationalism* — subjective human reason — which militates against the truth and warps the meaning of the text.

Nevertheless (and this is the **simple truth** which points to the *necessity of translations*): “[God] will have **all men to be saved** and to come unto the knowledge of **the truth**” (I Timothy 2:4). God’s universal will of grace is that all men hear His Word, be convicted of their sins and brought to Godpleasing contrition by His holy Law, be informed about His gracious reconciliation of the world unto Himself because of Christ’s vicarious atonement in their place, and be brought to saving faith — confidence of the heart — in Him as their Redeemer, the function of the Gospel (I Corinthians 2:1-2; II Thesalonians 2:14; Romans 1:16).

The purpose of “*prophesying*” or preaching the Word is “*edification and exhortation and comfort*” (I Corinthians 14:3). And, as the Apostle Paul points out in the context of these words, the hearers need to **understand** what is being spoken, what is being set forth, what is being preached, so that it is of “*profit*” or benefit to them. Jesus’ commission, “*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature*” (Mark 16:15), **assumes** the TRANSLATION of “*the Gospel*” into words that can be comprehended by their hearers. Thus the hearers in Jerusalem on the first Christian Pentecost, “*devout men out of every nation under heaven*” (Acts 2:5), rejoiced as they heard the disciples speak “*in [their] tongues the wonderful works of God*” (v.11). “*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls; and they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers*” (vv. 41-42). The preached Word **in translation** was both **authoritative** and **efficacious**, working true contrition (v. 37), and faith (v. 41), and edification (v. 42), and fellowship (vv. 44 & 46), as “*the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*” (v. 47).

Jesus said “*that repentance and remission of sins* [Law and Gospel, sin and grace] **should be preached** in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47), and that is exactly how it began on the first Christian Pentecost — with the Word of God **in translation**.

A word of caution is in order, lest we fall into the fleshly trap, instigated by Satan, of claiming that God’s Word, *even in translation*, cannot be understood by the average person. Were that the case, then God Himself would be a liar, who stated through the Psalmist: “*Thy Word is a lamp unto my*

feet and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105) ...*The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto **the simple***" (v. 130). On the basis of such a ludicrous claim, we would have to revise the universal will of God to read: "[God] will have all [*literate*] men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth [*insofar as they are capable of comprehending it*]." We would be compelled to "dumb down" the Word of God to beneath a fourth grade comprehension level and eliminate from the text (both in the original languages and in all translations) all such words as do not occur in *common everyday speech*, words like "*sin*" and "*transgression*" and "*iniquity*" and "*mercy*" and "*grace*" and "*longsuffering*" and "*justification*" and "*atonement*" and "*propitiation*" and "*reconciliation*" and "*fellowship*" and "*resurrection*" and "*salvation*," among many others. What legitimate translation exists that purports to eliminate such words and concepts in order to make the Bible more "user friendly"?? These are after all "*the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth*" (II Corinthians 2:13), and He is the one who gives "*understanding in all things*" (II Timothy 2:7). There is no legitimate translation of Holy Writ that accommodates itself to "everyday speech" and single-syllable "sound bites;" there is no legitimate translation of Scripture that eliminates "*the words... which the Holy Ghost teacheth*" (I Corinthians 2:13) in favor of someone else's words! The Christian's prayer, be he educated or uneducated, literate or illiterate, highly intelligent or mentally challenged, sighted or blind, should be: "***Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law!***" (Psalm 119:18). And Christian pastors, who are charged with the oversight, care and feeding of Christ's sheep and lambs (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2; I Thessalonians 5:11-14; Hebrews 13:17) should, as they preach and as they teach, as the servants of Christ, direct their hearers to the blessed simplicity of God's Word, which is able to save their souls (James 1:21). God grant it for Jesus' sake!

— D. T. M.





*“[They] began to speak with other tongues,
as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*

Acts 2:4

The prophecy of Joel concerning the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, as Peter preached it in Acts 2:17 —

וְהָיָה אֶתְּחִילִי־כֵן אֲשַׁפּוּ אֶת־רוּחִי עַל־כָּל־בָּשָׂר

καὶ ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις λέγει ὁ θεός
ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα.

**Et erit in novissimis diebus dicit Dominus
effundam de Spiritu meo super omnem carnem.**

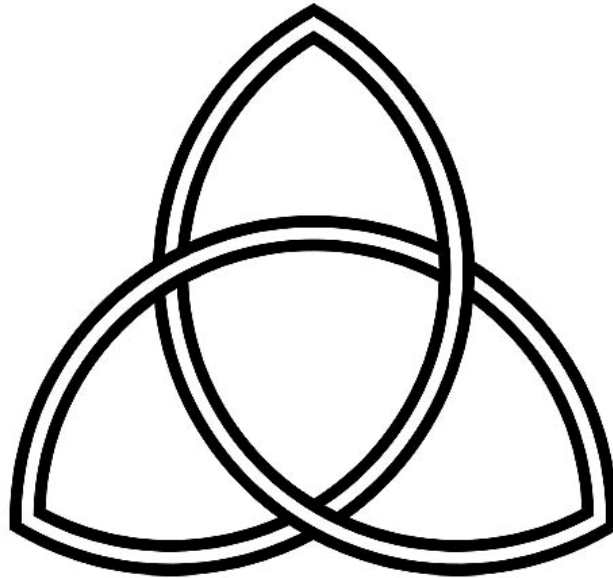
Und es soll geschehen in den letzten Tagen, spricht Gott,
ich will ausgießen von meinem Geist auf alles Fleisch.

**Dans les derniers jours, dit Dieu, je répandrai de
mon Esprit sur toute chair.**

*Y en los postreros días, dice Dios, derramaré de
mi Espíritu sobre toda carne.*

И будет в последние дни, говорит Бог,
излию от Духа Моего на всякую плоть.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith
God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.



Giving Glory to the Holy Trinity

*“Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things,
to whom be glory forever. Amen.”*

—Romans 11:36

As we celebrate, especially on the *The Feast of the Holy Trinity* (this year on June 16th), the essence of the **Triune God**, “*one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance*” (Athanasian Creed), that is, His essence, including His divine attributes and works, it behooves us, in a very simple way, to consider and answer on the basis of Scripture alone the question we ask in the exposition of Luther’s *Small Catechism*, the question that modernists assail as socially and politically “incorrect” and basically “arrogant” in a “pluralistic society,” namely, “Who is the **only true** God?” (Catechism Q/A 26).

The Psalmist declares by inspiration of the Holy Ghost: “*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth’s sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, ‘Where is now their God?’ But our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s*

hands” (Psalm 115:1-4); and St. Paul punctuates this statement of the Psalmist, saying: “*We know that an idol is **nothing** in the world, and that there is none other God but one*” (I Corinthians 8:4).

From the knowledge of history, ancient and modern, and from observation of human societies in the world, it is evident that men have worshiped and still today worship *creatures* as God, that is, things and beings that, having been “created,” have their *essence* from a source outside of themselves. They may be *creatures of God* (the sun, the moon, planets, other human beings, and even the lesser animals), OR they may be *creatures of men* (statues, totems, legendary folk heroes, emperors, and the like).

Others worship gods that are not the *Triune* God, such as the “Jehovah” of the Russellites, the “Jehovah” of modern-day Jews, and the “God” of the Unitarians, all of which exclude from the Godhead Jesus Christ, “*the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*” (John 1:14). Similarly the “God” of the lodges and of the Scouting organizations is a *deistic* supreme being, NOT identified specifically and certainly not exclusively as the *Triune* God. The Mormons regard Adam as God; the Muslims worship “Allah;” the Buddhists worship “Buddha” and lesser Buddhas; and the Hindus worship “Vishnu,” “Shiva” and “Brahma,” as well as “Brahman,” the supreme god-force present in all things. And many of the so-called “millennials” of our day and time, not willing to recognize God as a *personal* being, and certainly not as *triune*, are quite content to adapt the imagery of Hollywood to their concept of God as an impersonal “force for good in the world” and say, “May *The Force* be with you.”

And then, of course, there is the more subtle idolatry of those who fear, love and trust in *any* person or thing as they should fear, love and trust in the True God alone (cf. *Catechism* Q/A 29c), among which we identify their human intellect (Proverbs 3:5), their personal opinions (Romans 9:20), money (I Timothy 6:8-10) and material things (Matthew 6:24; James 5:1ff., I John 2:15a), secular science (where it conflicts with Scripture, I Timothy 6:20), family and “friends” (Matthew 10:37; I Corinthians 15:33; Proverbs 1:10); people in positions of power (Matthew 10:28), self-gratification (I Corinthians 6:19; II Corinthians 5:15); the world and its lusts (I John 2:15-17); etc.

However, we Christians, on the basis of the above and other crystal-clear passages of Holy Writ, dare to ask in the Explanation of *Luther’s Small Catechism* (Question/Answer 26) the question noted above that politically-correct modernists condemn as arrogant, self-serving and

unnecessarily exclusive: “Who is the **ONLY TRUE** God?” And we answer according to Scripture: “The **only true** God is the **Triune God**, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three distinct persons in one divine being or essence — the **Holy Trinity**.” St. Paul writes: “There is none other God but **ONE**” (I Corinthians 8:4). All the so-called “gods” of the world, the “*idols*” or nothings, “*the work of men’s hands*” (Psalm 115:4b), are also characterized by the Psalmist as “*do-nothings*.” “*They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them, so is everyone that trusteth in them*” (Psalm 115:5-8). On the other hand, the TRUE God, the TRIUNE God, says: “*Call upon ME in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify ME*” (Psalm 50:15).

While our title-text speaks specifically of the “glory” that we owe **TO** God (Latin: *Gloria DEO* [**DAY-o**]), as we reverence Him as “the highest being,” honor Him with our lives, and avoid what displeases Him (cf. *Catechism* Q/A 31), let us note first of all the “glory” **OF** God (Latin: *Gloria DEI* [**DAY-ee**]) that IS HIS *essentially* from all eternity, the glory that He receives from no one, the glory or magnificence that He Himself *is* and *has*, the glory that He demonstrates to men both in nature and in His Word, and the glory that He, as the only true and living God, is not willing to share with imposter-gods. “*I am the Lord; that is My Name. And My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images*” (Isaiah 42:8). His **essential, intrinsic glory** is evident not only in His **unity** as the **ONLY** true and living God, **ONE** in substance (Deuteronomy 6:4; I Corinthians 8:4; Jeremiah 10:10); not only in His **trinity** of three distinct persons in that one substance (Genesis 1:26; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; Psalm 2:7; John 15:26; II Corinthians 13:14; etc.), each of which has His own glory (Matthew 6:13; 16:27; 25:31; Mark 8:38b; John 1:14; 2:11; I Peter 4:14; etc.); but it is manifested in His creation of all things and declared by the vastness of the heavens (Psalm 19:1). Moreover, the glory of the Holy Trinity is also manifested in the divine works or miracles performed by the individual divine persons — **Jesus’** miracles in particular (cf. John 20:30-31, etc.) and those of the **Holy Ghost** (cf. Acts 2:4-12; 5:3, 5, 9 & 10; etc.).

Sinful men are *terrified* of God’s **glory** because its **perfection** convicts them of their unworthiness in His sight (Isaiah 64:6; Genesis 32:10) and reminds them of “*the wages of sin*” (Romans 6:23a) which, apart from

His grace in Christ Jesus (v. 23b), He could at any time visit upon them according to His justice. Thus sinners, even Christians according to their flesh, are “*sore afraid*” in the light of His glory (Luke 2:9), *tremble* before Him (Psalm 119:120), and *hide their faces* from Him (Genesis 3:8; Exodus 20:18-19-10) — even from His holy angels who appear in His glory (Luke 1:11-12; Matthew 28:2-4) as His messengers.

Moreover, the **glory** —the distinctly unique excellency, honor, splendor and magnificence— **of God** that distinguishes Him from all other entities is manifest in His **divine attributes**, each and every one of which is matchless and unequaled because of its **perfection**. In this connection it is interesting to note that the gods of this world cannot claim for themselves, nor do they even *attempt* to claim, the attributes of the only true and living God, nor His mighty works (Jeremiah 10:10-11), because they themselves are “*the work of men’s hands*” (Psalm 115:4); they did not exist before they were created; and they only exhibit the attributes of their “creators,” as imperfect as they are. (The Greek and Roman “gods” and “goddesses” are excellent examples of this in their pernicious attitudes, devious ways, and selfish motives, typical of *natural man*.)

What makes the only true and living God so **glorious, perfectly glorious**, is that He and He alone is **eternal** (Psalm 90:1-2), **unchangeable** (Malachi 3:6; Psalm 102:27), and **omnipotent** (Genesis 17:1; Luke 1:37; Matthew 19:26) — and therefore fully capable of creating, in six normal twenty-four-hour days, the world and universe (“*all things*,” – Proverbs 16:4) out of nothing by His almighty Word (Hebrews 11:3)! Only the true and living God is **omniscient** (Psalm 139:1-4), **omnipresent** (Jeremiah 23:24), **holy** (Isaiah 6:3), **just** (Deuteronomy 32:4), **faithful** (II Timothy 2:13), **benevolent** (Psalm 145:9), **merciful** and **gracious** (Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 103:8).

Only the true and living God is perfectly just and perfectly merciful at one and the same time — not only **epitomizing** but also fully **exercising** those two attributes, which are essentially contradictory, without compromising justice and without withholding mercy —without doing the *humanly* impossible. He **reconciled** those two *seemingly* contradictory attributes “*in Christ*” (II Corinthians 5:19), imputing *to Christ* the world’s trespasses (II Corinthians 5:21) and visiting the full force of His **justice** upon His Son (Galatians 3:13; I Peter 2:24a; Isaiah 53), including the pains of eternal death, “*the wages of sin*” (Romans 6:23a; cf. Psalm 22:1 and Matthew 27:46), so that He could be **merciful** to mankind, “*not imputing their trespasses unto them*” (II Corinthians 5:19), since He had

imputed them to **Christ**, but declaring the world forgiven and righteous in His sight because of the righteousness that Christ earned for all men, in their place and in their stead (Romans 5:18-19; Isaiah 61:10). This gracious gift of forgiveness and righteousness is to be accepted, received and made one's own "*by faith*" in what God Himself has done for us and for our salvation (Romans 3:24-28).

Thus the Apostle Paul declares concerning the vastness of God's glory a doxology reminiscent of but not a direct quotation of Isaiah 40:13; 46:9-10; and 55:8-9, and yet a doxology of unparalleled beauty:

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? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things! (Romans 11:33-36).

While some have seen in Paul's last sentence above references to the three distinct persons of the Godhead, such cannot be definitively shown from the text. Nevertheless the **prepositions** [*"of," "through,"* and *"to"*] of which "*Him*" is the object in all three phrases are indeed significant. For we have in "**the Lord**," in Jehovah, the Triune God, such wonderful, wise, inscrutable and unchallengeable wisdom and knowledge, both in His motives, in His eternal decrees (*creation, redemption and predestination*), and in the manner in which He brings them to pass, that He is the **source** of all those things, the **means** through which they are brought about, and **end goal** which all things ultimately serve, namely, His **glory**. Here the reader is directed to **Colossians 1:12-29**, where the Apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, sets forth and summarizes many of these very things of which the Colossian Christians (and we too) should recognize **the Lord** as their source, medium and final glory and for which they (and we) should be thankful and should glorify His Name. (For the sake of space, we do not quote the entire selection here, but **we urge you to read it in your Bible.**)

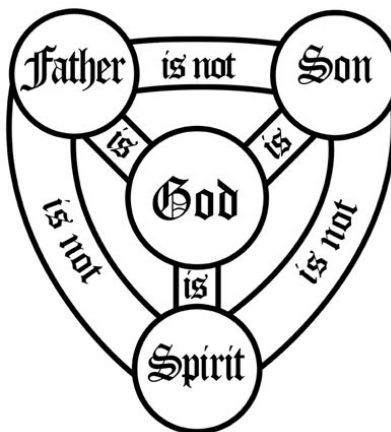
While the verses immediately preceding our title-text (Romans 11:33-36a) speak of those things which pertain to God's own intrinsic and essential glory (Latin: *Gloria DEI [DAY-ee]*), our **title itself** speaks spe-

cifically of the “glory” that **we owe TO God** (Latin: *Gloria DEO* [**DAY-o**]), as we reverence Him as “the highest being,” honor Him with our lives, and avoid what displeases Him (cf. *Catechism* Q/A 31). Because of God’s own glory and the fact that we, by His grace, are the recipients of the glorious blessings which He in eternity already, to His own glory, prepared for us, **we owe Him**, as the very least of our tokens of gratitude, **expressions of “glory”** — of praise, of exultation, of thanksgiving, of honor, of humble gratitude for His mercy — “*hosannas*” (“Save now, we pray!”) and “*hallelujahs*” (“Praise be to the Lord!”) — for all His benefits to us both temporal and spiritual (Psalm 103:1-5). The Psalms in particular are full of exhortations to praise God and to be thankful to Him for His blessings, all of which proceed from His glory.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord, He is God; it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise! Be thankful unto Him, and bless His Name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations! (Psalm 100:1-5).

Therefore, because of the glory of the Holy Trinity in and of Himself according to His essence, because of the glory of the Holy Trinity evident in His divine works, and because of the glory He has bestowed upon us out of His great love toward us poor miserable sinners for Christ’s sake, “*to [Him] be glory forever. Amen.*”

— D. T. M.



(Series: Exposition and Application of the Ten Commandments)

The Close of the Commandments

“I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God.”

—Exodus 20:5b; Deuteronomy 5:9b

A Christian, whether an adult or a child, should gratefully confess to the Triune God: *“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path”* (Psalm 119:105). What an unearned, unmerited, and undeserved blessing to have *“God’s words”* (John 8:47a) faithfully serve us as day-after-day and night-after-night *“counselors”* (Psalm 119:24b)! James, in the first chapter of his Epistle, says to all disciples of Jesus: *“Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures”* (vv. 16-18). The Holy Scriptures are not only a good gift, but they are also a perfect gift from God to us and, really, to the whole world.

The Ten Commandments, as well as all the other *“Commandments”* (John 14:15b), are God’s *“good gift”* (James 1:17a), God’s *“Law”* (Romans 3:20), to and for every one of God’s *“created”* (Genesis 1:27) human beings. With this article on *“The Close of the Commandments,”* the series on *“The Exposition and Application of the Ten Commandments”* comes to an end. It is our hope that this series has more and more stirred up your *“remembrance”* (II Peter 1:13 and 15) of what God teaches you in His holy Law about His just requirements and His demand for perfect obedience, has brought you more and more to see, acknowledge and confess your sins and shortcomings (Romans 3:23) by not perfectly obeying and following His Commandments, transgressions whereby you have deserved, yes, earned (Romans 6:23) according to His justice His righteous wrath and punishment, —and, through the Gospel has taught you the *“good tidings of great joy”* (Luke 2:10) whereby He brought you to faith in redemption, reconciliation and salvation by God’s *“grace”* in *“our Savior, Jesus Christ”* (Titus 2:11 and 13), and has motivated you more and more willingly to bow to Jesus’ words in John 14, *“If ye love Me, keep My Commandments”* (v. 15), letting these Commandments serve more and more as your *“lamp”* and *“light”* (Psalm 119:105), so that all people *“may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 5:16).

“I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God”

(Exodus 20:5b; Deuteronomy 5:9b).

Since “*there is none other God but One*” (I Corinthians 8:4c), He, as “*the Lord thy God,*” has the right to give us His Commandments, telling us how He wants us to be, and what He wants us to do and not to do in our lives. He demands and insists on strict and “*perfect*” (Matthew 5:48) obedience to His Commandments, and that is certainly His **right** as the only true and living God. This is the one true God’s declaration concerning Himself: “*I, the Lord thy God, am a **jealous** God,*” “jealous,” according to its first definition, meaning that He is watchful and careful to protect what is rightfully His. He does not want anyone else or anything else to be our God, to take His place, or to be a substitute for Him. In Isaiah 42, the Lord God Himself declared: “*I am **the Lord**, that is My name; and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images*” (v. 8). Therefore He instructs us in His very First Commandment: “***Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God***” (Exodus 20:3-5a).

When the devil took Jesus “*up into an exceeding high mountain, and show[ed] Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and sai[d] unto Him, ‘All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me’*” (Matthew 4:8-9), how did Jesus respond to the devil’s wicked enticement? He said to him: “*Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written: ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him **only** shalt thou serve’*” (v. 10).

God shows His jealousy when He commands that we “***love**” Him “with **all** [our] heart, and with **all** [our] soul, and with **all** [our] mind*” (Matthew 22:37). After giving Abraham, in “*his old age*” (Genesis 21:2), the gift of a son, God revealed that He was a **jealous** God when He “*did tempt (i.e., test) Abraham, and said unto him, ‘Abraham;’ and he said: ‘Behold, here I am.’ And He (God) said: ‘Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of’*” (Genesis 22:1-2). How did Abraham respond to this test from his **jealous** God? We are told

that “*Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac, his son, and clave [i.e., split] the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went unto the place of which God had told him*” (v. 3). After some days of travel, “*they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac, his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son. And the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham,’ and he said: ‘Here am I.’ And He said: ‘Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me’*” (vv. 9-12). God’s jealousy in regard to **our love** for Him is set forth so clearly in Matthew 10, where Jesus said: “*He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me*” (v. 37).

God also shows His jealousy when He, in Proverbs 3, says to us: “***Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths***” (vv. 5-6). Our jealous God, “*whose name is Jealous*” (Exodus 34:14), wants us to lean completely on Him, to trust totally in Him and in His words and promises; He does not want us to lean on ourselves, to trust in ourselves instead of leaning on and trusting in Him and His words and promises. In His jealousy, our God wants us to put into practice the words written down in I Peter 5: “*Casting all your care (your worries, your burdens) upon Him, for He careth for you*” (v. 7).

But what about all the times when we have **failed perfectly to obey** the Commandments of this jealous God, all the times when we **have not perfectly loved** this jealous God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and all the times when we **have not perfectly trusted and leaned on** this jealous God and on His written Word with all our heart during all our life? The Apostle James teaches us that “*whosoever shall keep the whole Law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*” (2:10). With the Psalmist each of us should confess: “*If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared*” (Psalm 130:3-4a). This forgiveness from God for our many sins, for our many failings, and for our many shortcomings is and will always remain forgiveness “*bought*” (I Corinthians 6:20a) “*with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*” (I Peter 1:19).

It is most certainly true and “*worthy of all acceptation* (for all to believe and accept)” (I Timothy 1:15a) that “*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing* (not charging) *their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation. ... For He* (God) *hath made Him* (Christ) *to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him* (in Christ)” (II Corinthians 5:19 and 21). What genuine and real comfort we have because God appointed Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God, who “*was wounded for our transgressions; [who] was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to His own way, and the Lord hath laid on **Him** (on Jesus) the iniquity of us all*” (Isaiah 53:5-6).

***“Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children
unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me”***

(Exodus 20:5b; Deuteronomy 5:9b).

These words of God are most certainly true. When children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren continue to hate God, continue to hate His Word, and continue to follow in the wicked, unbelieving ways of their parents and grandparents, then God will punish them, not only for *their own sins* as unbelievers, but He will also punish them for the sins of *their unbelieving parents, their unbelieving grandparents, and their unbelieving ancestors*. The *jealous* God has clearly said that He will visit with punishment “*the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me.*” Our *jealous* God will indeed carry out His words, whether people believe His words or whether they reject His words, and He will carry out His words in His own way and in His own time. He is “*a God of truth and without iniquity; just and right is He*” (Deuteronomy 32:4b).

However, when children, grandchildren, or great grandchildren of unbelieving parents and grandparents do not continue, by God’s “*grace*” (Ephesians 2:8-9), in the wicked, unbelieving, and rebellious ways of their parents and grandparents, but are brought confess and lament their sins (Proverbs 28:13) and to believe that “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners* (such as them)” (I Timothy 1:15b), such **believing** children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren will **not** be visited with God’s punishment, but will enjoy, for this life and for eternity, the blessings promised to all believers in John 3: “*He that believeth on Him* (on Jesus) *is not condemned*” (v. 18a); “*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life*” (v. 36a). It is most certainly true of all believers in Jesus and in His perfect,

finished obedience, suffering, and death for all sinners: *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk (who behave) not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”* (Romans 8:1).

God is not only a *jealous* God; He is also a **just** and **holy** God, who hates sin and the sinners. We have clear proof of this in Psalm 5, where King David confessed to God: *“Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with Thee. The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight; Thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing (lies); the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man”* (vv. 4-6). The judgment and punishment deserved from God for **one’s own sins** are very great and very far-reaching, *“for our God is a consuming fire”* (Hebrews 12:29). But if, **in addition** to the judgment and punishment from God for one’s own sins, the judgment and punishment of God from previous generations of those hated Him and His Word would also be visited upon their unbelieving children, their unbelieving grandchildren, or their unbelieving great-grandchildren, the consequences would be terrible and awful. In Galatians 6, we are given this reminder: *“Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”* (v. 7). The Lord Himself speaks in Romans 12, where He says: *“Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord”* (v. 19b).

***“And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me
and keep My Commandments”***

(Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10).

God, through Christ Jesus, has been merciful, compassionate, and full of pity toward *“the world”* (John 3:16), and has published His reconciliation of the world (II Corinthians 5:19) to all men in the Gospel (Romans 10:18). *“But they have not all obeyed the Gospel”* (Romans 10:16). Many in unbelief persistently resist the Holy Ghost (Acts 7:51) and reject God’s gift of salvation (13:46). But only those whom God has called *“out of darkness into His marvelous light”* and, by faith in Jesus, have now *“obtained mercy”* (I Peter 2:9-10), enjoy and will keep on enjoying for themselves God’s mercy through Christ Jesus. Only true Christians can confess: *“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not; they are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness”* (Lamentations 3:22-23).

God promises to bless and be merciful to the *believing* (Colossians 3:26; Acts 16:31) descendants of His saints and His elect for many generations as give evidence of their faith in Christ Jesus as their Savior by

continuing in His Word (John 8:31) and following Him (Matthew 16:24), by hearing His voice (John 10:27) in the preaching of His Word (Luke 10:16), and by holding fast (Revelation 3:11) to those *“things which [they] have learned and [have] been assured of, knowing of whom [they] have learned them”* (II Timothy 3:14).

Only true Christians can and will confess: *“We love Him* (the one, true God) *because He first loved us”* (I John 4:19) in and through the perfect, substitutionary obedience, suffering, and death of Christ Jesus for us and for *“the whole world”* (I John 2:2).

Only true Christians can and will *“keep [God’s] Commandments”* (Exodus 20:6; John 14:15), though imperfectly (Philippians 3:12), to give evidence of their love and gratitude to Him for having His Son, Christ Jesus, perfectly keep and *“fulfill”* (Matthew 5:17) the Law of God for them, in their place, so that now they are *“righteous”* (Romans 5:19b) through *“the Lord our Righteousness”* (Jeremiah 23:6).

As we now close out this series on the “Exposition and Application of The Ten Commandments,” we Christians have many reasons to rejoice because *“Christ hath redeemed us* (bought us back) *from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree’”* (Galatians 3:13); we Christians have many reasons to rejoice because *“Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth”* (Romans 10:4); and we Christians have many reasons to rejoice because *“when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”* (Galatians 4:4-5).

“Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (I Corinthians 15:57-58).

— R. J. L.

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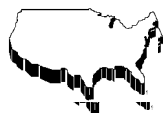
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Pastor: (206) 723-7418

E-mail: revworley@gmail.com

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

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Adult Bible Class 4:30 p.m.

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Motto:

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I Peter 1:25

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