

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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**“It is Christ
that died,
yea rather,
that is risen
again.”**

—Romans 8:34



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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 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*" (1 Corinthians 1:10)

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 Old Testament Passover and Christ, OUR Passover

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



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

of which the Old Testament sacrifice was only a type. And Jesus’ words, though their true meaning had been “*hid from them*” (Luke 18:34), cast a pall of impending tragedy upon the mood of the disciples as they looked forward to the otherwise festive Passover observance just ahead.

On the first day of the “*Feast of Unleavened Bread*,” as the Passover festival was also called (Exodus 12:17, Matthew 26:17, etc.), the 14th day of the month of Nisan, Jesus sent Peter and John into Jerusalem to make preparations for the Passover meal, which He intended to celebrate one last time with His disciples. The Lord, according to His divine omniscience and providence, had already seen to it that a suitable location would be available, “*the guestchamber*” in a certain house, which was “*a large upper room, furnished and prepared*” (Mark 14:12-16) for the purpose. The furnishings no doubt included the traditional Passover table surrounded by low couches on which dinner guests traditionally reclined, all the necessary dishes for the setting of the table, and perhaps even the staple foods that were to be served (with the exception of the Passover lamb itself); and the room had been “*prepared*” in advance of their arrival, with the search for and removal of any stray “*leaven*” or leavened bread (Exodus 12:19) already having been completed, presumably by the host, the night before or at least by noon on the 14th. The two disciples then had to fight the crowds in and around the Temple to procure a properly selected and Levitically inspected lamb that met the requirements of the Lord in Exodus 12:3-5, and they had to slaughter this lamb publicly in the Temple early “*in the evening*” (v.6), aided by the priests, who caught the blood in basins and deposited it on the great Altar of Burnt Offerings. During the on-going slaughter of hundreds and even thousands of such lambs, the “*Hallel*” [hah • LAYL] was sung by the Levites, with certain lines repeated by the worshipers as a kind of refrain. After the lamb had been dressed and cleansed, and the inedible parts had been removed to the altar for burning, Peter and John brought the carcass down from the Temple Mount to the house where Jesus and the rest of the disciples met them later that evening. There the lamb was roasted according to the Lord’s regulation in Exodus 12, and the table was spread also with the other specified ingredients of the supper: Unleavened loaves (flat “boards”) of bread [*ma • TZÖTH*], signifying the haste with which the Children of Israel left Egypt in the Exodus; bitter herbs [*mah • ROHR*] reminiscent of the bitter bondage they served under Pharaoh; and a sauce of finely-chopped apples, raisins, nuts and cinnamon [*chaROseth*] symbolizing the mortar used in the building of Pharaoh’s cities. There was also a ceremonial wine

goblet on the table which was filled and passed around on three specific occasions during the service [*seder*], or there were three separate cups serving the same purpose without one having to be refilled. (A fourth cup seems to have been added somewhat later in the history of the Passover *seder*.) Grape wine was used, made from “*the fruit of the vine*” (Luke 22:18); and it was commonly mixed two-to-one with water.

The purpose of the *first* Passover was *sacramental*, in that the blood of the Paschal lamb painted upon the doorposts of their houses saved the Children of Israel from the angel of death in the Tenth Plague upon Egypt. It was the God-appointed *seal of His grace* toward them, with His own *promise of deliverance* attached to it. And the benefit was *received by faith*, by confidence in the surety of God’s promise, which faith the people *showed* by displaying the blood on their houses. And the *perpetuation* of that sacramental act was ordained by the Lord Himself through Moses in Exodus 12:14, namely, that “*this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations*” —not merely for the purpose of “remembering” a historical occurrence, but for the purpose of “telling” (*Hagga • DAH*) or proclaiming the grace of God sealed to Israel in that sacrament and of remaining in the grace of God by faith in His mercy.

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

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

On the Passover table had been three loaves or sheets of unleavened bread at the outset. The sheet in the center had been divided in half, according to the Passover liturgy; and half had been *set aside* as a kind of dessert or “after-dish” [*Aphikomen*] to be eaten at the *end* of the meal, after which nothing else was to be eaten. The rest of the bread was consumed *during* the meal itself. Having “*fulfilled the Law*” by completing the Passover meal as it had been instituted, the Lord Jesus “*took bread*” —presumably of the *Aphikomen* left over from the Paschal supper— “*and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying: ‘This is My body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.’*” Note that the roasted meat which they had consumed before had not been “symbolic” of a lamb’s body; it was of a lamb’s *true* body. Likewise Jesus gave to His disciples not bread “symbolic” of HIS body, but bread which He Himself said “*IS My body.*” [The ridiculous claim that Jesus did not use the word “*is*” in the Aramaic of the Hebrew language—which He no doubt spoke in the presence of His disciples—is of **no consequence** to us, since the Greek word “*is*” constitutes an undisputed part of the text and, as the word which the Holy Ghost Himself gave to the writers, it indicates not only what Jesus *meant*, but what He *said*, even though the word in Aramaic is only “understood.”] “*This do,*” as the replacement of the *old* ordinance, “*in remembrance,*” not of the Paschal lamb of the Exodus from physical bondage to Pharaoh, but “*of ME,*” the Paschal **Lamb of fulfillment**, who “*through death ...destroy[ed] him that had the power of death, that is, the devil [the angel of eternal death], and deliver[ed] them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to [spiritual] bondage*” (Hebrews 2:14-15). “*Likewise He took also the cup after supper*” (Luke 22:20) —after He had fulfilled the ordinance of the Passover supper— the **third** cup on the table, the *Kiddush* [*kid • DOOSH*] cup or “*cup of blessing*” as St. Paul calls it (1 Corinthians 10:16), over which the final “*blessing*” or thanksgiving of the Passover meal was offered, “*saying: ‘This cup is the new testament*” —the testament or covenant of **fulfillment** rather than of prophecy— “*in My blood,*” the blood of Christ, who “*offered Himself without spot to God*” (Hebrews 9:14), the blood “*which is shed for you,*” and Matthew adds, “*for the remission of sins*” the blood of Him “*whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through*

faith in **HIS blood**” (Romans 3:25). “**This** do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of **Me**” (I Corinthians 11:25), not in remembrance of a lamb, or a symbol, or a token, or a gesture, but in proclamation of “**the Lord’s death**, til He come” (v. 26). Thus we confess with Luther concerning this blessed Sacrament of the Altar: “**It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.**”

Still then to celebrate the *Passover* of the *Old Testament*, as if the *New Testament* of fulfillment had not replaced it, as if the blood of animal sacrifices still pointed ahead to that which had not yet been accomplished, as if “*the blood of bulls and of goats*,” yea, as if the blood of a Paschal lamb were of any significance whatsoever for our deliverance from slavery to sin, from bondage to Satan, and from the fear of death into the “*promised land*” of heaven, would be to **desecrate** the “*one offering*” whereby Christ “*perfected forever them that are sanctified*” (Hebrews 10:14). Nay rather, let us rejoice in the victorious cry of “*Christ, our Passover, sacrificed for us*,” the declaration of the “*Lamb of God*” (John 1:29) from His cross of agony: “*It is finished!*” or, more precisely from the Greek of the text for our enduring comfort and assurance: “*It stands accomplished!*” [ΤΕΤΕΛΕΣΤΑΙ]. For with the flawless prophetic perspective afforded by God’s Holy Spirit, Isaiah saw it, as if it had already occurred —still in the time of the Old Covenant— the “*Lamb without blemish and without spot*” (I Peter 1:19) having vicariously suffered in **our place** the wages of sin and having laid His all-sufficient atonement before God as payment-in-full for **our** transgressions: “*Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed... For He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was He stricken. ...He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth; yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief... He shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities*” (Isaiah 53). No wonder the Lord Jesus Himself revealed to His servant, John, in a prophetic vision the joyful song of praise that even the angels of heaven shall sing to the Lamb of God, even though they, as sinless beings, have no personal need of His atoning sacrifice: “*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!*” (Revelation 5:12).

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

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

(Martin Luther in *TLH* 195, 3)

—D. T. M.





The God-Man Jesus Christ in His Gethsemane Prayer

“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” — Matthew 26:39

As we in spirit stand in the shadows there in the Garden of Gethsemane, we see Peter, James and John huddled together, keeping watch with Jesus, trying to stay awake; for was the middle of the night on Maundy Thursday, *“the same night in which He was betrayed”* (I Corinthians 11:23). And, at the Savior’s urgent bidding, they were trying to concentrate on praying that, in the coming hours, they would not be led into temptation. But though the New Man in them was certainly *“willing”* not only to watch with Jesus but also to pray, their *“flesh [was] weak”* (Matthew 26:41); and they kept dozing off, again and again, as if they were not really aware of the imminent danger, both to themselves and to Jesus, that lay before them.

We also see Jesus, all alone, a little way off, deeply absorbed in thought, consumed with fearful anxiety, and engaged in fervent prayer. Yes, here was Jesus, at one and the same time **“TRUE GOD**, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also **TRUE MAN**, born of the virgin Mary” [Luther]. The Evangelist Luke tells us (22:41ff.) that *“He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast; and He kneeled down, and prayed, saying, ‘Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me.’”* What an odd picture, considering who Jesus is! After all, here is the very Son of God, the King of kings and Lord of all lords, on His **knees**—in **prayer**—**begging**! —**begging** His heavenly Father to remove from Him a *“cup”*—the ancient symbol of a bitter prospect, of a cruel fate, of a sad, unbearable experience that lay ahead—like a cup of bitter, burning poison that a person might be forced to swallow as a cruel punishment! What could possibly be so **horrible** to look forward to for the almighty, holy, sinless Son of God?? What was His Father handing Him in that cup which made Him so **fearful**, so **apprehensive**, so **terrified** and so **distraught**??

The Bible says: *“He hath made Him who knew no sin **TO BE SIN** for us.”* (II Corinthians 5:21). It was part and parcel of the eternal plan of redemption that God the Father would make His only-begotten, holy Son into a kind of “scapegoat” for sinners. To that end, He would cause Him to become **incarnate** (that is, to become flesh and blood and to take a truly human nature into His Godhead so that He could be *“made under the Law”* (Galatians 4:4) and be subject to suffering and to death, as we are). He would then **load Him down** with the sins of the **world** and make Jesus **guilty** of sin, even though He had never committed a single one! And finally, He would **punish** Jesus—He would pour out the full wrath and vengeance of His holy **justice** against His own holy Son, making Him bear in His sinless soul and body *“the wages of sin”*—**“death”** (Romans 6:23)! On the basis of Scripture, we recognize **death** as **SEPARATION**! **Spiritual** death is separation of the soul from God in this present life by reason of the guilt of sin which man brought upon himself and because of which man is God’s enemy! **Temporal** death is separation of the soul from the body—the tearing asunder of the human being, something God never intended to happen when He made man in the beginning, the horrible result of sin which man willingly, wantonly brought upon himself by his disobedience of God’s law! And **eternal** death is the permanent separation of both soul and body from God in the excruciating fires of **hell**—death without letup, punishment without end!

*“The **fear of death**,”* the writer to the Hebrews tells us, is what makes poor sinners *“all their lifetime subject to **bondage**”* (Hebrews 2:15)—slaves to the prospect of having our lives cut short, terrified of dying, feeling the anguish of guilt, and anticipating its horrible consequences! And, although Jesus Himself was *“without sin”* (Hebrews 4:15), yet He was made to suffer the **guilt** of sin, something completely foreign to His nature as true **God**, and even to His **sinless human** nature, to bear a **guilty conscience** before God and the prospect of His **just anger**!! And Jesus, according to His true human nature, shrank back in horror from the prospect of such punishment!! “Please!” He cried. “Do I really have to go through all of this to redeem the world from sin??” Oh, He **knew** it **well**; but in His *State of Humiliation*, He did not always and fully **make use** of the divine attributes communicated to His human nature—including His perfect knowledge of all things. Instead he humbly subjected His **human** will to the will of His dear **Father**, saying: *“Nevertheless,”* that is, in spite of the fact that I’m dreading the consequences of the guilt I’m

bearing; in spite of the fact that, as a true human being, I'm not only consumed with guilt but am "scared to death" of what is coming; nevertheless, "***Thine be done***" (Luke 22:42) —the **will** with which I, as true God, am completely in agreement from eternity already, wanting to be the Savior of mankind!

The **answer** to His prayer? "*And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, **strengthening Him***" (Luke 22:43). The cup wasn't removed—and thank God it wasn't!! And the Savior was to humble Himself even more by accepting help and strength from one of His own creatures!! The Father had answered Him by giving Him the strength, the fortitude of both His human soul and His human body, to **bear** the guilt, to **endure** the agony, to **face** the mockery, to **experience** temporal death, and to **suffer** the pains of Hell!

And with that strength from above, Jesus battled the temptations of the devil all the **more fiercely**, He suffered **more intensely**, He anguished **more profoundly** over the guilt He was bearing!! "*And being in an agony, He prayed **more earnestly**! And His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground!*" (Luke 22:44). —"*Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,*" Isaiah wrote of Jesus in the 53rd chapter of his prophecy (v. 4)! The misery of His guilt had so overflowed His sinless **human soul** that it manifested itself in the agony of His **human body**!

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! (TLH 153, 3)

It was **your** guilt He was bearing! And it was **mine**! ...multiplied by the guilt of the **millions** and countless **billions** of sinners whose griefs and sorrows had been heaped upon His sinless soul! **That's** what He was suffering! **That's** the **GUILT** He was bearing! Oh, if anything at all should bring us to our own knees in humble sorrow over our many sins and shames, surely the picture of this suffering Savior must do it, His gracious love constraining us! (II Corinthians 5:14).

But **why** did **HE** have to bear it? Why **Jesus**, the sinless Son of God?? Why was the "*cup of suffering*" not withdrawn from Him, to spare Him all that agony and bloody sweat? Oh, my dearly-beloved fellow sinners, there's the mystery of Gethsemane! Therein lies the reason for our joy through our tears at witnessing the agony of the dear Lord Jesus! For the Bible says of the Father's inscrutable will: "*He hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin **FOR US**, that we might be **made the righteousness of God in Him!***" (II Corinthians 5:21). Had Jesus not borne **our** guilt **for** us, in our place, as our substitute, God would have had to punish **us**! If Jesus had not endured the shame and contempt of every sinner, the world would still be **condemned**! Jesus "*took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men...*" (Philippians 2:7), was "*made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law...*" (Galatians 4:4-5), "*suffered once for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring **us** to God!*" (I Peter 3:18). **That's** why!

"*Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?*" Jesus asked His disciples in retrospect after He was risen from the dead (Luke 24:26). Wasn't it **worth it**?? My dear readers, "[*Christ*] was delivered for [Greek: "*because of*") **OUR OFFENSES!**" "*For the transgression of [His] people was He stricken!*" (Isaiah 53:8). He took upon Himself **your** guilt and **mine** and suffered all our punishment!

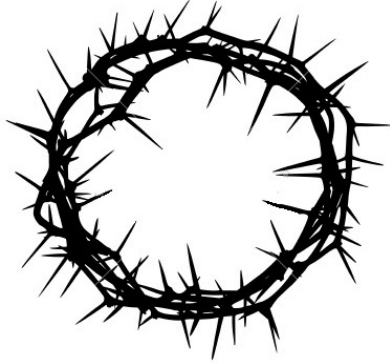
Here we rest, in wonder viewing
all **OUR** sins on **JESUS** laid!
Here we see redemption flowing
from the sacrifice **He** made!

Lord, in loving contemplation,
fix our hearts and eyes on **THEE**,
Till we taste Thy full salvation
and Thine unveiled glory see!

(TLH 155, 2 and 5)

May God grant us all such deep appreciation for the agony of our Savior under the load of **our** guilt, humble repentance for **our** many sins which caused His bloody sweat, and sincere confidence in the sufficiency of **His** merits to purchase our redemption from His heavenly Father, who, for **Jesus'** sake, "*reconcil[ed] the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*" (II Corinthians 5:19). "Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto Thee!" (TLH 151)

—D. T. M.



“A Bone of Him Shall Not Be Broken”

“When they came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs... that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ‘A bone of Him shall not be broken.’” — John 19:33 and 36



How significant this precious text of God’s Word should be to us Christians as we meditate upon the great passion of our Savior and His *vicarious atonement* for the sins of the world! And yet, many who read in the Gospels the passion history of Jesus’ suffering and death tend to gloss over the pertinent event recorded in our text as a mere “detail” of something that “just happened” and thus miss its striking importance. Indeed, though St. John *alone* reports it in his Gospel by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he states precisely *why* he does so, namely, “*that ye might believe*” (John 20:31). In this case, what the soldiers *did NOT* do is just as significant as what they *did*.

We note in the context (v. 31) that the Jews, in their fastidious effort to observe the *outward ceremonies* of the Law (while flagrantly transgressing its *substance*), demanded of Pilate that the victims of crucifixion on Calvary’s hill be **unceremoniously** “dispatched” so that their bodies could be removed from sight before the onset of the Sabbath. Not only was the Sabbath itself “*an high day*” for the Jews, but the Sabbath *at the time of Passover* was **especially** important to them. No matter that they had **murdered** the very *Son of God, the promised Messiah*, by their hatred of Him, by their evil plotting, their

false witness, their blasphemy, their envious bloodthirst, and their screaming cries for His crucifixion — they were *more* concerned that the mere presence of dead bodies (and particularly the corpses of executed criminals) would *defile* them and make them *unworthy* to eat the Passover (Deuteronomy 21:23), even though there was a clear-cut exception made by God Himself in Numbers 9:6-9! And, while the Romans generally preferred to let the victims hang on their crosses for even days at a time to die a slow and torturous death and, at the same time, to serve as a deterrent example to the people passing by, the Jews’ request to hurry the process was often granted as a political gesture of

good will. Thus the soldiers assigned to the execution detail would, on special orders, take clubs and literally *beat the victims to death*, deliberately breaking their legs and other bones to inflict fatal trauma and hasten their end. Upon Pilate's authorization, the grizzly task was carried out as the soldiers on duty began with the "malefactors" crucified with Jesus, both of whom were apparently still alive on their crosses as the shadows began to lengthen on Good Friday afternoon.

*"But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead **already**, they brake not His legs."* The fact that they "saw" that Jesus was dead is of no small importance, for these men were experienced executioners who recognized *by sight* the difference between a living person and a cadaver. And, even if, as scoffers claim, their "trained eyes" had somehow deceived them, their commander, the centurion, was *present* when Jesus died (Matthew 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47), *witnessed* how He expired, and spoke of Him in the *past tense*! Add to that the sure punishment of death for dereliction of duty that all of them would have faced if Jesus' body had been released *alive* to Joseph of Arimathea!! They had absolutely *no vested interest* in neglecting the battering of Jesus' body, if indeed He *had* been alive. But they dispensed with the breaking of His legs because He "*was **dead already***" (v.33). And just to make sure, "*one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side*" — whether with a shallow probing "prick" to check for any reaction (as some surmise), or whether with a deep plunge into Jesus' body (as Thomas' post-Easter examination of the wound seems to indicate, John 20:25 and 27), the result was the same — "*forthwith came there out **blood and water***," forensic evidence that true death had occurred. They saw it; their commander assured Pilate of it (Mark 15:44-45); John knew it and testified to the fact by inspiration of God. And, instead of rushing Him off for medical treatment, Jesus' friends **buried** Him! There was no need to "*break His legs*." The objective evidence of Jesus' **real death** — *factual, forensic and circumstantial* — is overwhelming!

But that is not the only reason why the soldiers did not break Jesus' legs. John says that "*these things were done **that the Scripture should be fulfilled***." From the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel, where Gabriel announced to Joseph the Savior's conception by the Holy Ghost in his virgin wife (v. 22), to Jesus' rebuke of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus after His resurrection (Luke 24:25-27), the holy, inspired record of Jesus' brief visible sojourn here on earth stresses throughout His perfect fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning the promised Messiah. And even those prophecies which spoke of events, circumstances and deeds played out by *others* were fulfilled to the letter (from the journey of the Wise Men and Herod's slaughter of Bethlehem's babies to the piercing of Jesus' hands, feet and side, and His burial in the tomb of wealthy Joseph of Arimathea). How foolishly, yea, how brazenly and wickedly, the critics of the Holy Scriptures scoff at their inerrancy and authority when, time and time again with perfect consistency, "*the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth*" (I Corinthians 2:13) vindicate *themselves* against any and every challenge! To any objective examiner, the critics indeed take on the appearance and character of clowns, jugglers and contortionists for all the "mental gymnastics" to which they resort and all the "off-the-wall" assumptions they make to discredit the verbally inspired Word of God! What proud know-nothings they are, "*men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth*" as St. Paul describes them in I Timothy 6:3-5!

Nevertheless, all of these things impact upon the **chief reason** why not a bone of the Lord Jesus was broken, and why the evangelist John reports this "detail" in his Gospel account, namely, "*that ye might believe*." Believe *what* in particular? John expands on this reason in chapter 20, verse 31, saying "*that ye might believe **that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name***." For the **key** to the importance of Jesus' bones not having been broken, we go back to Exodus chapter 12, where the Lord through Moses instructed the Children of Israel concerning the **Passover**, particularly concerning the Passover **lamb** that was to be sacrificed, prepared, and eaten by the people — the lamb whose **blood**, painted on the doorframes of their houses, would save them from the Angel of Death. Do you remember the *description* of that lamb? — "*Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ...and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses wherein they shall eat it. ...And when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will **pass over** the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.*"

Not only is the promised Messiah described in specific prophecies of the Old Testament as "*a lamb*" (in Isaiah 53 for example), but in the New Testament, in John 1:29, Jesus is called "*the Lamb of God*" by John the Baptist; and thereafter this precious imagery is repeated, not in a vague sentimental manner but with specific reference to the Old Testament Passover as a *type of Christ*, who was the *true* sacrificial Lamb slain vicariously to deliver sinners from death. Take, for example, I Peter 1:18-19, where the Apostle says, "*Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...but with the precious blood of Christ, **as of a lamb without blemish and without spot***." And the

Apostle Paul clearly identifies the Passover Lamb as a *type of Christ* in His *vicarious atonement*, leaving nothing to inference or to our deduction, saying in I Corinthians 5:7, “*For even Christ, **our Passover**, is sacrificed **for us**.*” Why? The writer to the Hebrews answers, “*That through death He might...deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage,*” that is, to deliver from slavery to sin, death and the devil poor sinners who, through fear of “*the wages of sin*” (Romans 6:23a) because of their iniquities, were in perpetual spiritual bondage and had nothing to look forward to but everlasting death in hell!

The seemingly insignificant fact that *not a bone of the Lord Jesus was broken* seals to us the assurance that He is without doubt “*the Christ, the Son of God,*” (John 20:31), the **true** Passover Lamb slain for sinners, and that, as such, His blood “*cleanseth us from all sin*” (I John 1:7). Witness this, first of all, in the description of **how** the Passover lamb was to be **handled** according to the Lord’s directive in Exodus 12:46 — “*In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; **neither shall ye break a bone thereof.***” And in Numbers 9:12 we read the same — “*They shall leave none of it unto the morning, **nor break any bone of it.***” Moreover, as we noted before, even *these statements* were prophetic of “*Christ, **our Passover***” as David writes of Him in Psalm 34:20 — “*He keepeth all His bones: **not one of them is broken.***” And even Pilate’s heathen soldiers, who knew nothing of these prophecies in the Old Testament, were compelled to comply with them *in spite of their orders*, “*that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ‘A bone of Him shall not be broken.’*”

What a wonderful, iron-clad testimony to the authority and reliability of God’s Word! And what a reassuring and comforting evidence for our faith in the all-sufficient *vicarious atonement* of our Savior, **the Lamb of God**, for whose sake God reconciled the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (II Corinthians 5:19)! “*They brake not His legs,*” John reminds us, “*that the Scripture should be fulfilled*” (19:33, 36) AND “*that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name*” (20:31).

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!

TLH. 153, 4

— D. T. M.



Did Christ REALLY Rise from the Dead on Easter Morning?

*“He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.
Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”*

Matthew 28:6



Each and every year, we feature in the March–April issue of our *Concordia Lutheran* an article — perhaps even several — on **the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**. Why? Not because it is a “calendar item” that deserves ink in the spring issue of a “church paper.” Certainly not because of a perceived need to convince *ourselves* of this momentous event as a literal fact of history when the Word of God unequivocally testifies to it! Not even to play “David” to the “Goliath” of the skeptical, unbelieving world round about us and to set forth the “*many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3) which positively defeat its blasphemous claims to the contrary! Nor yet to draw a sharp contrast between **our** *orthodox*

stand on this fundamental doctrine of Holy Scripture and the *liberal, modernistic* view of so many today who **represent** themselves as “Christians,” yea, even as “Lutherans,” and yet deny the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead! Let’s face it, brethren, the masses of name-only Lutherans do not read, nor do they have any interest whatsoever in, our *Concordia Lutheran*! And, sad to say, many who posture themselves these days as “confessional” Lutherans are so busy debating “hot-button” topics — church polity within and without synodical bodies, the nature of truly “Lutheran” liturgy, the question of “when” the Real Presence occurs in the Lord’s Supper, and how pastors of autonomous congregations are to be supervised by super-pastors in a neo-episcopal church structure — that the consideration of truly *doctrinal* matters has to “take a number” and wait its turn! Among a growing number of them, our Concordia Lutheran Conference is derided as a “micro-synod” that is stuck in a kind of theological time-warp and hardly on the “cutting edge” of 21st Century *confessionalism*. Their derision of our small size (Luke 12:32) and of our consistently Scriptural position (Mark 8:38) for now almost sixty years after our separation from the heterodox Missouri Synod is of no consequence to us whatsoever (Matthew 10:22); for it is by the grace of God that we are what we are (cf. I Corinthians 15:10).

The moment we begin to take for granted the basic, fundamental doctrines of Holy Scripture and deem them unworthy of preaching, teaching, discussing, publishing and defending (in favor of theological and ecclesiastical fluff), we shall lose our orthodox character altogether and become a mere flash-in-the-pan of trendiness and unworthy of true discipleship. The doctrine of **the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead** on Easter morning is worth every inch of space we devote to it **because** of its **profound, essential importance** to our faith as Christians. Its *denial* means the denial of Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Matthew 12:39-40; Romans 1:4; Acts 2:23ff.). Its *denial* means the denial of His promises and assurances as the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth (John 2:19, 21-22; Luke 18:33; 24:6-8). Its *denial* means the denial of Holy Scripture as the verbally-inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative, clear and all-sufficient Word of God (I Corinthians 15:4; Luke 24:25-27)...which we preach (I Corinthians 15:14-15). Its *denial* means the denial of Christ’s vicarious atonement as payment-in-full for the sins of all mankind (Romans 8:34; 14:9; II Corinthians 5:21). Its *denial* means the denial of God’s justification of the entire world of sinners in view of His Son’s all-sufficient propitiation (Romans 3:25; I John 2:2; I Corinthians 15:17; II Corinthians 5:19; Romans 4:25). Its *denial* means the denial of the resurrection of the body at Christ’s second visible advent (I Corinthians 15:16, 20-23; I Thessalonians 4:14, 16). And its *denial* means the denial of conversion, regeneration, sanctification in the narrower sense, the significance of Holy Baptism, and a whole host of other sacred teachings of Holy Writ which are tied to His resurrection. Its *denial* means the denial to ourselves of the very comforts that distinguish the Christian’s hope from the hopelessness of unbelievers (I Corinthians 15:19; I Thessalonians 4:18; I Peter 1:3; etc.)!

The simple, yea, childlike answer (Matthew 18:3; Mark 10:15; etc.) to the question that serves as the title of this article, “**Did Christ REALLY Rise from the Dead on Easter Morning?**” is an unequivocal “**Yes!**” Our confident

answer is not based on human scholarship, not on archaeological “digs” and the discoveries of “relics,” not on the testimony of the “ancient church,” nor on the Lutheran Confessions (in which there are few references to it since it was never a doctrine in controversy among professing Christians up to that time). For us Christians, the witness of **Holy Scripture** is, of course, sufficient *on its own* as the infallible source and norm of **Divine Truth**; for the Lord Jesus says in John 8:31-32, “*If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know **the truth**, and the truth shall make you free.*” And again: “*Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice*” (John 18:37). Jesus Himself said that He would rise again, and Jesus Himself did in fact rise again, “*as He said*” (Matthew 28:6). The Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments comprise “*a more sure Word of Prophecy*” (II Peter 1:19) than either eye or ear witness, as Peter points out concerning Christ’s manifestation of Himself on the Mount of Transfiguration. Therefore, when the Apostle Paul writes in I Corinthians 15:4 that “***He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures***” and confirms in verse 20, “***Now is Christ risen from the dead,***” that is **PRECISELY WHAT HAPPENED** on Easter morning. That is not the Apostle’s personal *opinion* based upon the risen Savior’s personal appearance to **him** on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-5; I Corinthians 15:8), but the testimony of the **Holy Ghost** Himself, as Paul also states concerning **verbal inspiration**: “*We speak not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the **Holy Ghost** teacheth*” (I Corinthians 2:13).

It is the **RECORD** of **Holy Scripture** that convinces us to acknowledge the facts, the **RECORD** of **Holy Scripture** whereby the Holy Ghost causes us to assent to that record as being completely true; and it is the **RECORD** of **Holy Scripture** whereby, as His means, the Holy Ghost creates in our hearts the confidence to trust in it for our comfort and assurance. Human beings, being arrogant and self-assured by nature (even we Christians in our Old Adam, Romans 7:18), are quite ready to accept the testimony of fellow human beings — of historians, of scientists, of scholars — but “*the witness of God is **greater***” (I John 5:9). “*He that believeth not **God** hath made Him a liar because he believeth not the record that **God gave of His Son***” (v. 10). **THIS** is the record:

- The pre-incarnate Christ Himself, speaking through the Psalmist, prophesied His resurrection from the grave (Psalm 16:10); and this prophecy was fulfilled (Acts 2:29-31).
- Job confidently speaks of his Redeemer as *living* (Job 19:25), although Isaiah testifies that He vicariously *died* (Isaiah 53:8-12). Both Scriptures must be true (John 10:35; 17:17).
- Jesus, before His great passion, foretold and promised His resurrection on the third day (John 2:19, 21-22; Luke 18:33). And our Savior never lied or was deceitful (I Peter 2:22).
- The Jews well knew His prophecy and feared its fulfillment (Matthew 27:63).
- The guards posted at the Savior’s grave witnessed it firsthand (Matthew 28:2-4), reported it to the Jews (v. 11), and were bribed to lie about what had happened (vv. 12-15).
- The angels at the tomb plainly stated that Jesus was risen (Matthew 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:5-8).
- At least **twelve appearances** were **recorded**— to Mary Magdalene; to the women on the road to Jerusalem; to Peter; to the disciples on the way to Emmaus; to the ten disciples on Easter evening; to the eleven one week later; to the seven fishing; to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee; to 500 brethren at once; to James; to the eleven at His ascension; and to Paul on the road to Damascus after His ascension. (Compare the Gospel accounts and St. Paul’s statement in I Corinthians 15:5ff.).
- The apostles and evangelists bore witness publicly to the Savior’s resurrection, and not one word of contradiction is recorded as having been lodged by ANYONE (See the Gospel accounts; Acts 1:3; 15, 22; 2:22-36; 4:33; Acts 10:40-41; Romans 6:5, 9; I Corinthians 15:4-8 and 12ff.; Philippians 3:10; I Peter 1:3; 3:21; etc.)

Those who *reject* what the Scriptures plainly state, *refuse to hear* what they say, and do whatever they can to *discredit* the record of Holy Writ, are simply not Christians and heirs of everlasting life. They are unbelievers, headed for damnation (John 8:47; Mark 16:16b); and we should not at all be bothered by their skepticism, blasphemy, and hardness of heart.

It is only of incidental interest to note that, in addition to the **clear and unequivocal statements** of Scripture that Christ did in fact rise from the dead as He promised, statements “*written for our learning*” (Romans 15:4) and summarized above, there are “*many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3) — also recorded in the Scriptures by verbal inspiration of the Holy Ghost — which establish the facts, even according to the rules of evidence and testimony

admissible even in a *civil court*. These are well known to every knowledgeable Christian, but we summarize them again in this present article for ease of reference and for edifying discussion:

QUESTION: Was Jesus **really dead** when He was laid in the tomb? In direct contradiction of the popular theory, the so-called “swoon theory,” that Jesus had not in fact died on the cross but was only in a coma when laid in Joseph’s sepulcher and exited it on the third day after having revived in its cool and refreshing atmosphere, there is *more than sufficient evidence* that the Savior was **really DEAD** when He was laid in the tomb.

There is first of all *circumstantial evidence* — readily admissible in court. Consider the following: **a)** The centurion in charge of the crucifixion has no vested interest at all in the faking of Jesus’ death. He would have been summarily executed if he had. Dereliction of duty was a capital crime among the Romans. **b)** The rest of the soldiers, all heathen Gentiles (and probably Romans) also risked execution if they had conspired in the faking of Jesus’ death. What could they have possibly gained?? **c)** Apart from Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (and perhaps Lazarus of Bethany), none of Jesus’ disciples were men of means capable of offering a bribe sufficiently large to turn the heads of the soldiers and tempt them to risk their very lives in the perpetration of a hoax. **d)** Jesus’ friends buried Him!! Because He was **dead**! If He had still been alive, they would have given Him medical attention and then removed Him to a suitable facility for treatment, for intensive care, and for eventual recovery! No reasonable or sane person would *bury* a person *alive* —especially a loved one! No reasonably intelligent person would leave a friend in critical condition without medical care for thirty-six hours!! —Friday evening at sundown to Sunday morning at dawn.

There is, as we know, *medical evidence* that no forensic pathologist would dispute: Jesus’ blood had separated into lymph and clotted solids — a sure sign of **physical death** (John 19:34).

There was the *testimony of trained personnel* who would qualify even today as “expert witnesses” in court: **a)** The centurion supervising Jesus’ execution *saw* that He “*gave up the ghost*” and reported this to Pilate (Mark 15:39, 44, 45). **b)** The detail of soldiers that inspected the bodies and finished off those who were still alive “*saw that He was dead already*” and so did not break His legs but rather pierced His side with a spear, yielding the medical evidence referred to above as proof that **true death** had in fact occurred (John 19:31-37).

QUESTION: Did Jesus **really rise** from the dead on Easter morning? And in direct contradiction of the so-called “stolen body theory,” according to which scoffers and skeptics allege that Jesus’ admittedly dead body was removed from the tomb by the disciples and buried elsewhere in some secret location, the following *evidence is more than adequate* to prove that He was **definitely** “*alive after His passion*,” (Acts 1:3), **really** “*risen*” from the dead “*as He said*” (Matthew 28:6).

Again, there is the following *circumstantial evidence*: **a)** The guards had to be bribed to keep them from reporting what they in fact *saw*!! (Matthew 28:11-15). **b)** The body of Jesus had been *unwrapped*, and the graveclothes were neatly *laid aside* (Luke 24:12); and the napkin that had covered Jesus’ face was *folded* in a place by itself (John 20:7) — completely out of character with the haste required by a body snatching under the eyes of Roman sentries! **c)** If Jesus’ friends had been party to a “hoax” to influence public opinion, they would not have been hiding after having re-buried Jesus’ body, but would have been spreading the *concocted* story of His resurrection (John 20:19).

There is *physical and medical evidence* that the risen Christ was not a figment of someone’s imagination or a hallucination: **a)** Jesus *spoke* (Matthew 28:9-10; Luke 24:17-27, 30, 32; John 20:15-17, 19-29); **b)** He *ate* (Luke 24:41-43); **c)** He had a *material body* that was able to be felt and examined (Luke 24:39-40; John 20:25-27); and **d)** no evidence *to the contrary* was ever found!! Those who still seek Jesus’ dead body seek it in vain!

Moreover, as noted above, there was more than ample *eyewitness testimony* regarding Jesus’ **appearances**. At least **twelve** appearances were **recorded** — and St. Paul challenged any skeptic to interview the witnesses personally! Of the “*five-hundred brethren*” to whom Jesus appeared *as a group* on one specific occasion, Paul states that *over half of them were still alive* (I Corinthians 15:6) and thus able to be consulted at the time he wrote his first letter to the Corinthians (roughly at Easter time in 58 A. D.), twenty-five years after Jesus’ resurrection!

Of Christ’s bodily resurrection from the dead there is simply **no doubt whatsoever**! He **IS** risen! He is risen **INDEED**! Hallelujah!

—D. T. M.

Walking with the Risen Savior in His Word

*“And they said one to another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us
while He talked with us by the way
and while He opened to us the Scriptures?’”*

—Luke 24:32

Many of us have hanging in our homes the beloved painting of Jesus walking with two disciples on the way to Emmaus on Easter afternoon. And, although the occasion itself is specifically connected to the Savior’s mighty resurrection from the dead, and the content of their conversation was a discussion of what had just happened in Jerusalem and how all those things had been prophesied of old in the Holy Scriptures of “*Moses and all the prophets*” (v. 27), both the image of that intimate walk with the Savior and the content of His “Bible class” are truly timeless. As we wistfully look at the three figures standing on that dusty road shaded under the lush canopy of the forest, we



can almost hear strains of “Abide with Me! Fast Falls the Eventide” (TLH 552) and imagine *ourselves* enjoying that blissful communion with the Lord Jesus and then inviting Him to spend even more time with *us* in *our* Christian home and family circle (v. 29).

We would hope, of course, that the picture has *just such* significance for us and for our dear people and is not merely decor to be displayed and dusted — as are many family Bibles on coffee tables and in book cases. And yet, Christian art, pictures and images should not just serve as *sentimental* “triggers” to evoke superficial emotionalism in us. For it is a cunningly-devised myth (II Peter 1:16a) and therefore a deceptive error that there is a “closer walk” with our Savior that involves something MORE than His

indwelling presence (John 14:23) which we have by faith in Him (Ephesians 3:17a), a walk that requires “feeling” His presence and “experiencing” Him in our lives. And, closely attached to that error, is the false teaching (also a cunningly-devised myth) that God communicates with us apart from His written and spoken Word, the *Holy Scriptures*, and that therefore we should want to have, look for, and even expect personal, special revelations from our Savior as evidence of our communion with Him. Those who accept and trust in this latter myth often speak of prayer as a “dialog” with God in which they speak with Him and in which He answers them directly apart from the Scriptures. We apply to all such the term “enthusiasts” [German: *Schwärmer*] to identify their fanatic, anti-Scriptural position and their insistence that the Holy Ghost works in the hearts of men apart from the Gospel and the Sacraments as the “means of grace.”

Jesus said to Thomas, who had demanded to *experience* His risen Savior with his *senses* (John 20:25): “*Blessed are they that have NOT **seen** and YET have **believed***” (v. 29b). The writer to the Hebrews defines faith as “*the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things NOT seen*” (11:1); and that faith is created, strengthened, and preserved in us by the Holy Spirit of God **through His Word** (John 17:17, 20; I Peter 1:23; Romans 1:16; 10:17; John 8:31-32; I Peter 1:5; etc.), a “*more sure Word of Prophecy*” (II Peter 1:19) than even **eye-** and **ear-**witness testimony. Therefore, when Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:17a), we have His sure promise: “*Lo, I am with you [believers] **always, even unto the end of the world***” (Matthew 28:20b) — “*whom having **not seen**, ye love; in whom, **though now ye see Him not**, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*” (I Peter 1:8).

It is, of course, significant that even the two disciples walking with the risen Savior on that road to Emmaus did NOT **really** “see” Him **at all**, did not even recognize Him, “*while He talked with [them] by the way;*” for “*their eyes were holden that they should not know Him*” (Luke 24:16). When, therefore, we Christians pray the Savior to abide with us, when we utter that prayer also in our hymns and spiritual songs, we do not look for a visual manifestation, nor for an auditory manifestation, nor even for an emotional manifestation of Him that we can “experience” or perceive with our senses. For we already have **BETTER-THAN-THAT** in the certainty of His promises. We have His *mystical* presence with His indwelling in our hearts (Ephesians 3:17a); we have His personal *illocal* presence, also according to His

human nature, “*even unto the end of the world*” (Matthew 28:20b); we have His *sacramental* presence in the Holy Supper of His true body and blood which we eat and drink in, with and under the visible elements of bread and wine (I Corinthians 11:24ff.); and we have His *repletive* presence, according to which He fills all things with His divine power and majesty (Ephesians 4:10). Concerning the Savior’s **presence** among us, therefore, we should “*be not faithless but believing*” (John 20:27b).

What was even **more striking** to the Emmaus disciples than the fact that they had actually walked with their risen Savior, in His visible presence, without even realizing it, was the **content** of their **conversation** with Him and what He had **revealed** to them. Note their words in our title-text: “*Did not our heart burn within us while He **talked** with us by the way and while He **opened to us the Scriptures**?*” Though He seemed to them to be “*only a stranger*,” they shared with Him the information that made them sad (v. 17), the fact that they had trusted in Jesus of Nazareth as a great prophet and as the Redeemer of Israel (vv. 19 and 21), the tragic news that the Jews had delivered Him to be condemned to death and had crucified Him (v. 20), and their almost vain hope — on the basis of the women’s testimony and that of Peter and John — that He had perhaps risen from the dead, but that no one had actually *seen* Him. You see, His mere “presence” did nothing to allay their fears, to comfort them, to convince them, and to focus their “*holden*” eyes on His promises. He “lit into them,” as we sometimes say, with a forceful admonition concerning their foolish reticence “*to believe*” ...NOT what their friends had told them, not what their hearts hoped for, not what their “*gut*” was revealing to them, but rather “*all that **the prophets** have spoken*” (v. 25). For, as Abraham had said to the rich man in hell concerning his unbelieving brothers, “*If they hear not **Moses and the prophets** [that is, the written Scriptures], neither will they be persuaded **though one rose from the dead***” (Luke 16:31). It would not be His mere “presence” that would persuade them, nor a mere “appearance” to them “*at meat*” in Emmaus (v. 30) and later that evening to the ten disciples in Jerusalem (vv. 36ff.). For Jesus had “***showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them,***” Luke tells us in Acts 1:3; and yet the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is denied still today **despite** those “*infallible proofs.*”

The mere **perception** of Christ’s presence with us, whether real or imagined, is **NOT** what enables us to “*walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and **stablished in the faith** as [we] have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving*” (Colossians 2:6-7). But the Psalmist confesses to the Lord: “***Thy Word** is a **lamp** unto my feet and a **light** unto my path*” (119:105); His Word is that perfect illumination “*whereunto [we] do well that [we] take heed, as unto a **light** that shineth in a dark place*” (II Peter 1:19). And the Lord Jesus states in His prayer to His heavenly Father: “*Thy Word is **truth***” (John 17:17). “*Everyone that is of the **truth** heareth **My voice**,*” He testified to Pilate (John 18:37). Therefore if we are to be His true followers (John 10:27), those who walk in Him (Colossians 2:6), those who are His “*disciples indeed,*” who “*know the truth*” and are *made free* thereby from soul-destroying error, Jesus tells us: “*Continue in **My Word***” (John 8:31-32). For “*[we] are built upon the foundation of the **apostles and prophets** [the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments], **Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone** [the essential, central, and indispensable *keystone* or *capstone*], in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom [we] also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*” (Ephesians 2:20-22). If Jesus is to abide in us and we in Him, then it is **His Word** that must abide in us (John 15:7) as the only source and standard of the “*one faith*” (Ephesians 4:5), “*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*” (Jude 3), “*the doctrine which is according to Godliness*” (I Timothy 6:3; cf. 4:6).

If we hear Jesus’ Word and refuse to follow it, we foolishly build upon a foundation of “*sand*,” He says (Matthew 7:26) and should expect a great fall (v. 27), a fall about which we have been amply warned (I Corinthians 10:12), a fall “*from [our] own steadfastness*” (II Peter 3:17) into doubt, misgiving, unbelief and despair! How do we avoid that catastrophic collapse of our faith? Peter writes that if we truly want to beware of “*being led away with the error of the wicked*” and falling from faith, we need to “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*” (v. 18) — growth which comes only from that perfect, pure, and essential spiritual “*milk*” which God Himself has given to us for our sustenance (I Peter 2:2).

No wonder the hearts of Cleopas and his fellow disciple *burned within them* as Jesus “*talked with [them] in the way,*” while they were walking along the road with that “*stranger in Jerusalem*” who they imagined to be ignorant of all the things that had transpired on the first Good Friday and on that very Sunday morning! It was not Jesus’ **PRESENCE**; it was His **WORD**! No wonder their hearts *burned within them* as Jesus, the “*stranger,*” “*opened to [them] **the Scriptures***”! It was NOT the “vibes” of Jesus’ **PRESENCE** that warmed the cockles of their hearts, but the spiritual heat generated in them by the Holy Spirit through the **SCRIPTURES**, the Scriptures which “*are able to make [us] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (II Timothy 3:15).

The hearts and minds of those who refuse to **walk with the risen Savior IN HIS WORD** will never “*burn within [them]*” with the knowledge of the truth, with the surety of salvation, with the comfort of the Gospel, with steadfastness of faith, with “*the peace of God which passeth all understanding*” (Philippians 4:7), and with the ready ability “under fire” to “*give an answer to every man that asketh [them] a reason of the hope that is in [them] with meekness and fear*” (I Peter 3:15). Instead they will be as unsteady, as uncertain, and as ungrounded as a paper boat on a breezy pond, “*tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive*” (Ephesians 4:14). We have heard of their own mouths NOT the “*oracles of God*” (I Peter 4:11) but the “*good words and fair speeches*” (Romans 16:18) of rationalism, subjectivism and emotionalism that leave them without “*an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast*” (Hebrews 6:19) — the “*good words and fair speeches,*” however, “*whereby they lie in wait to deceive*” the unwary (Ephesians 4:14b), and, in the case of shepherds, whereby they destroy their own flocks (Jeremiah 25:34; Ezekiel 34:2-10; etc.)!!

Instead of proclaiming **rock-solid Scripture** upon which to base **true surety**, we hear their uncertain, equivocating buzz-words again and again: “We *consider* this to be the truth...” “we *perceive* this to be right...” “we are *not comfortable* with the use of this passage...” “the *maturity of my faith* enables me to distinguish between true and false doctrine...” “we believe that the strict application of a clear passage of Scripture is an *overemphasis* and is an *unevangelical* policy...” “I find as a pastor and theologian that trying to follow the *logic and thinking* of a false prophet is *helpful*...” “we *deplore* the use of Romans 16:17;” etc.

It is even dangerous to quote “orthodox fathers” indiscriminately, giving the impression that just because they wrote or said something, it must be true. The “fathers” dare never become our authority! When we cite them, we should be careful to limit our acceptance of their words and of their judgment, saying, for example, “as Luther [Walther, Chemnitz, Quenstedt] rightly points out in conformity with Scripture... on the basis of Holy Writ,” etc. Even our *quia* subscription to the *Book of Concord* (1580) is predicated on the fact that the Lutheran Confessions are a correct exposition of the **Word of God** in those matters which they treat. However, we cannot give, nor do we require, a *quia* blanket subscription to the writings of our “fathers.”

By God’s grace and with His help, “*let US hold fast the profession of OUR faith without wavering, for He is faithful that promised*” (Hebrews 10:23) — “*hold fast*” with the strength that only **His Word** supplies; “*the profession,*” speaking “*as the oracles of God*” (I Peter 4:11); “*of our faith,*” that ONE faith “*built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*” (Ephesians 2:20); “*without wavering,*” steadfastly anchored on the Rock of our Salvation and His precious **Word** “*which liveth and abideth forever*” (I Peter 1:23). “*For He is faithful that promised*” — promised in His faithful **Word**: “*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life!*” (Revelation 2:10b).

Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide,
for ‘round us falls the eventide;
nor let Thy Word, that heavenly Light,
for us be ever veiled in night!

In these last days of sore distress
grant us, dear Lord, true steadfastness;
that pure we keep ‘til life is spent
Thy Holy Word and Sacrament!

Oh, keep us in Thy Word, we pray;
the guile and rage of Satan stay!
Oh, may Thy mercy never cease;
give concord, patience, courage, peace!

A trusty weapon is Thy Word,
Thy Church’s buckler, shield and sword.
Oh, let us in its power confide
that we may seek no other guide!

Oh, grant that in Thy holy Word
we here may live and die, dear Lord!
And, when our journey endeth here,
receive us into glory there!

(TLH 292, selected verses)

— D. T. M.

Churches in Fellowship

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Olu-Ama (Kula), Nigeria

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abule Egba, Lagos, Nigeria

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Thompson Compound Abalama Abalama,

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ST. CLEMENT'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Elem-Sangama, Nigeria

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Elem-Sangama Arch-Deaconry

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ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL

Abonnema, Nigeria

The Rev. Nimi B. Fyneyface, Pastor

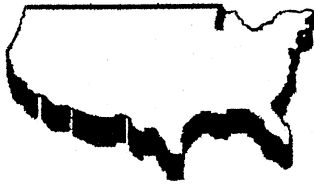
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Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor

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Parsonage: (708) 532-9035

Pastor's Cell: (708) 601-3943

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

Telephone: (541) 258-2941

Pastor's Cell: (206) 579-8861

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

5350 South Fountain Street, Seattle, WA 98178

Sunday School & Bible Class 4:00 p.m.

Worship Service 5:30 p.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor

483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355

E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

On the Web at

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Pastor's Cell: (206) 579-8861

ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411

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

Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

The Rev. DAVID J. MENSING, Pastor

22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411

E-mail: d_rnensing@hotmail.com

On the Web at

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Telephone: (708) 757-6859

Pastor's Cell: (708) 655-7549

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

300 North Ridgeland Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302

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

Worship Service 10:15 a.m.

The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor

233 North Cuyler Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302

E-mail: robertjlietz@gmail.com

On the Web at

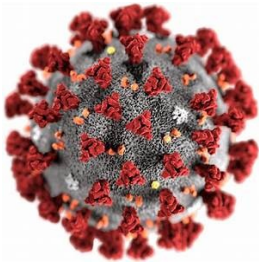
TrinityEvLutheran.com

Parsonage: (708) 386-4145

Pastor's Cell: (708) 556-892

(During the current pandemic, please call the respective pastors regarding **assembled** or alternative “**virtual**” services.)

Help us, Good Lord!



“Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

—Philippians 4:6

Lord God, dear heavenly Father, may it please Thee according to Thy merciful providence to regard our beloved country in this time of peril as we still experience, though in decreasing measure, the threat of exposure and infection due to the virulent Coronavirus in its various forms, in particular to the elderly, the frail, and the immunocompromised among us. Even as we exercise prudent measures to contain this virus and to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our neighbors from contagion by means of vaccinations and other mitigations, keep us from anxiety, depression and despair; and cause us rather, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to let our requests come before Thy throne of grace, commending ourselves to Thy special fatherly goodness for Jesus’ our Savior’s sake. Then may it please Thee in Thine own best time and way to comfort us in this time of chastening and to calm us with regard to our concerns, granting us patience under our frustrations and a happy issue out of all our afflictions according to Thy promise that all things work together for good to them that love Thee, to them who are the called according to Thy gracious purpose. We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ, our precious Redeemer, our only Mediator and Advocate at Thy throne. Amen.



Announcing the
Sixty-ninth Annual Convention
of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference

June 24, 25, and 26, 2022

at

St. Luke's Lutheran Church

5350 South Fountain Street
Seattle, Washington 98178

The Rev. Paul E. Bloedel, Pastor

There is NO Plenary Pastoral Conference this year.

The Board of Directors Meeting is on **Thursday, June 23rd**



Convention Motto:

Holding Fast to Objective Justification

Doctrinal Essay: *Holding Fast to the Scripture's Teaching of Objective Justification*

by Pastor Paul E. Bloedel

Friday Sermon on Romans 5:18-19 — President Paul E. Bloedel

Sunday Sermon on II Corinthians 5:19 — Pastor David T. Mensing