

# Journal of Theology

Summer 2018 Volume 58 Number 2

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# Journal of Theology

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The *Journal of Theology* is the theological journal of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. The *Journal of Theology* is designed to deepen the understanding and sharpen the skills of those who teach the Word of God. The *Journal of Theology* also testifies to the confession of our church body and serves as a witness to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, and His unchanging Word.

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## Notes From the Editor

### A Correction

Our last issue (Volume 58, Number 1) was misidentified on the cover as Spring 2019. The inside page identified the issue correctly as Spring 2018. We apologize for this proof-reading oversight and the resultant confusion.

### CLC Convention Essays

The first two articles in this issue were presented orally to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession June 21-24, 2018. The *Journal of Theology* has been publishing the Convention essays in recent years. Beginning with the 2020 Convention, the official distribution of these essays will return to past practice and the essays will be published as a supplement to the *Proceedings*.

### Additional Online Content

As part of his article, *The Lord GOD Came with a Strong Hand*, Professor John Ude provided an additional document featuring fifty Old Testament prophecies and their New Testament fulfillments. This document is available as additional content on our website ([journaloftheology.org](http://journaloftheology.org)) under the “Topic Focus” tab. This is also the location where we have placed compilations of articles on a particular subject area. We will continue to add additional online content in this location whenever it becomes available.

### In His Word

This issue introduces a new feature in the *Journal of Theology*, “In His Word.” The articles in this recurring feature will provide extended study notes from a pastor’s desk. These notes may be a springboard to a greater study by our readers, they may serve as a running start for a Bible Study, and they may simply be for one’s own private meditation, devotion, and growth.

—WCE

# The Lord GOD Came with a Strong Hand!

**John M. Ude**

*O Zion, You who bring good tidings, Get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, You who bring good tidings, Lift up your voice with strength, Lift it up, be not afraid; Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him. **Isaiah 40:9-10***

## **I will put enmity.**

The Lord GOD certainly came with a strong hand in creation. He spoke, and a perfect universe with everything from fireflies to stars—dancing by their billions in the twilight—came to delight our senses.

The Lord GOD certainly came with a strong hand in the flood. He spoke, and hurricanes and tsunamis swept the earth so that we see “billions of dead things buried in rock layers laid down by water all over the earth.”<sup>1</sup>

The Lord GOD certainly came with a strong hand at Babel. He spoke, and man’s attempt to exalt himself to heaven was washed away like a sand castle before a tidal wave. The Lord’s hand was strong, it exposed man’s “greatness” as being so puny that the all-seeing God ironically had to come down to see it.

The strong hand of the Lord revealed man’s pursuit of self-security as the rebellious confusion it propounds and produces, and it revealed that nothing man-made can ever reach to Heaven, save one thing—the scars in the hands of Christ.

But with, “*The Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand,*” Isaiah focuses our attention on the greatest work of the LORD—a work then yet to come, a work which establishes His saving rule for all, a work that brings His reward, a work that would lead men to say, “Behold our God.” It is good tidings of our Messiah’s saving work to be heralded from the high mountains.

The Lord Jehovah GOD came with a strong hand in the garden of Eden. This strong hand was needed to rescue the situation after man had totally ruined Yahweh’s (יהוה) perfect paradise. Man’s sin and its curse affected everything

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<sup>1</sup> Answers in Genesis, Ken Ham, [answersingenesis.org/media/audio/answers-with-ken-ham/volume-123/billions-of-dead-things](http://answersingenesis.org/media/audio/answers-with-ken-ham/volume-123/billions-of-dead-things)

in the universe. From that time forward, thorns, thistles, germs, bacteria, viruses, anguish, suffering, deceit, decay, degeneration, and death have held sway. And now Satan still continues to seek to use all of this in order to convince us that life is meaningless unless we seize the pleasures of the moment. “Just do it,” “Fulfill yourself,” “Be true to yourself,” “Forge your own destiny,” Satan says. He whispers, “God knows that on this path, you will be god, truly free to choose your own good and evil, your eyes will be opened to experience every celestial delight.”

If Satan can't convince us that such a life—empty without God—is really full, then he works overtime to convince us that the life that is full with God and His service is actually empty and filled only with troubles, trials, and tribulations. Mankind has exchanged the image of God for such a total corruption that “*the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*” (Genesis 8:21), and “*our righteousnesses are like filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6).

We have jumped out of the airliner, *The Will of Yahweh*, with no parachute, no means to fly, and no means to hinder absolute free fall. Rationalizations and claims of “I don't deserve this,” “I'm better than most,” “I'll atone for myself, if only . . .” flit through our minds as fast as the streaming air rushes past a skydiver. But we have no ability to change our destiny, namely, the abrupt smack into the hard ground of divine justice. “*The soul who sins shall die*” (Ezekiel 18:20).

The one and only thing that did not change when we jumped out of *The Will of Yahweh* is the Lord Jehovah GOD Himself. His love is so great that with a strong hand He found a way to save the rebellious fools—those who abandoned His will, defiled His love, and traitorously destroyed every good thing He had so lovingly made. With quick action, He swooped under us to bear us up on wings of an eagle. “*I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel*” (Genesis 3:15). Yahweh would reach across the impossible gap. Satan pointed his bony finger, “It is impossible to save them. They broke Your law. You declared the verdict Yourself. They must die.”

Even supposed Christian theologians offer opinions such as, “It's impossible. God cannot become man and die.” With a smile of loving promise, Yahweh arranged for the impossible to take place. He Himself would become flesh—born of a virgin. In this personal union there is such a sharing of attributes that God is man and this man is God, Immanuel. In this personal union, God died—His holy, precious blood was the payment sufficient for the

guilt of the whole world, including yours. He absorbed the whole smack of divine justice in your place so that borne up on the wings of His righteousness, you and I might fly again in *The Will of Yahweh* all the way to Paradise restored. The Lord Jehovah GOD came with a strong hand! Prophecy fulfilled. Paradise secured. Proclaim the good tidings!

### **I will bless all nations through you.**

The Lord Jehovah GOD came with a strong hand! Yahweh wants people who are His peculiar possession (1 Peter 2:9), people who treasure His love for them. But this, too, is impossible by our reasoning or effort. Instead of repenting, man argues, "I've tried to do good. I've done my best, there must be some recognition." We may wish the Lord had said, "Do your best." But He did not. He said, "*Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect*" (Matthew 5:48), and that pins us to the wall. We have, how often, told the Monarch of the Universe, "No, I will not do Your will first. No, I will not honor Your love above all. No, I will not respect Your law above my wants or desires." It is hazardous and arrogant to say "No" to the Monarch of the Universe. The ultimate consequence of such audacity is that, "*Your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear*" (Isaiah 59:2).

Yet, Yahweh Himself would mend the impossible gap. In grace, He would create a people for Himself, choosing Abram with the Messianic promise, "*In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed*" (Genesis 12:3). Even with God starting him in faith, Abram could not remedy the gap. His lie, endangering Sarai, would have overturned the whole plan without the Lord's intervention (Genesis 12:10ff). His attempt at surrogate fatherhood to produce the Messiah only produced an enslaved bondage under the law (Genesis 16:1ff, Galatians 4:20ff).

But Yahweh would indeed remedy the impossible gap. "*Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug*" (Isaiah 51:1). "*By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore*" (Hebrews 11:11-12). Yahweh called forth His people from the barren rock of sinful man. "*Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*" (John 1:13). The Lord Jehovah GOD came with a strong hand! Prophecy was fulfilled. Paradise is secured. Shout the good tidings from a high mountain!

**I will raise up one like you, pleading for grace upon grace.**

The Lord Jehovah GOD came with a strong hand! Yahweh wants a people who delight to *“proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”* (1 Peter 2:9). But this, too, is impossible by our reasoning or effort. God appeared and spoke to Israel. What more could He do to exhibit His strong hand? *“Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly”* (Exodus 19:16,18). Yet, Israel *“trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die’”* (Exodus 20:18-19).

Yahweh set His tabernacle in their midst, showing He wanted to dwell in the very midst of their whole life. With every sacrifice typifying Christ, His grace proclaimed forgiveness. With every waft of incense, His grace invited their prayers which are through Christ a sweet-smelling aroma to Him. With every moment of His glory shining from the cloud of His presence, His grace made manifest that His light could guide their feet in the path of blessing. Yet, they did not delight in having Him at the center of their lives proclaiming His praise. Within a few weeks, they bowed to a golden calf and *“rose up to play”* (Exodus 32:6). Even men who had seen GOD’s strong right hand chose lust instead of love, fornication instead of consecration, lip prattle instead of praise. Yahweh declared that Israel was no longer His people, and He told Moses, *“Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation”* (Exodus 32:10).

But Yahweh would bridge the impossible gap. He moved Moses to use this very condemnation to appeal to God’s promise, God’s mercy, God’s faithfulness to His people—to pray for *“grace upon grace”* (John 1:16 ESV). *“Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people”* (Exodus 33:13). The LORD gave grace for grace. On the basis of this grace, Moses laid claim to all God is, and he receives it. And Yahweh said, *“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest”* (Exodus 33:14). The Lord Jehovah GOD showed them the glory of grace for grace by proclaiming His name. *“The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin”* (Exodus 34:6-7).

Notice Yahweh uses the very formula of the law to proclaim His grace upon grace. As the law demands an eye for an eye, the gospel promises grace for grace. Moses thus prefigured the One whose *“fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace”* (John 1:16 ESV). Jesus in grace took our sin’s guilt upon Himself and in exchange gives us His righteousness. Jesus in grace died our death and in exchange gives us His life. Jesus in grace took our sins on His own body and in exchange opens the veil for our prayers to come before the Father as a sweet-smelling aroma. Jesus in grace came to earth to suffer and in exchange gives us the privilege to reign with Him in Heaven. The Lord Jehovah GOD came with a strong hand! Prophecy was fulfilled. Paradise was secured. Lift up your voice with strength to praise such grace for grace!

### **I am the Chief Cornerstone.**

The Lord Jehovah GOD came with a strong hand! Yahweh wants a people who build everything on the one chief cornerstone (1 Peter 2:6). But this, too, is impossible by our reasoning or effort. How would you feel if you wanted to do something great for Jesus—a sacrificial gift of love—and He rejected it? 2 Samuel 7 records that King David wanted to build a temple for the LORD. He offered billions of dollars to make it great, and the LORD took his check out of the offering plate and tore it up. David’s plans were not in line with Yahweh’s blueprints for the eternal, living temple of peace. *“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever”* (2 Samuel 7:12-13).

David conquering Goliath and all the enemies of God’s people can be compared to Jesus conquering sin, death, and the devil to establish the Kingdom of God. But 1 Chronicles 22:8,9 points out that because David *“shed much blood,”* his very warfare prevented David’s kingdom from being a type of Jesus’ kingdom of peace and rest. So, he could not *“build a house for God’s name.”* When God pictures His work in things of this earth, He can only give a partial glimpse of His kingdom. Jesus established a kingdom for us without shedding anyone else’s blood. He shed His own blood in place of everyone else. In Jesus’ blood, washing us clean from all our sin, we have the peace with God that, yes, truly passes all understanding.

It is as obvious that Solomon was included in this promise about David’s Son building a house, as it is obvious that the promise reaches far beyond him. Three times in 2 Samuel 7 the pre-incarnate Christ promises that His house and His kingdom shall be forever, shall never end. If this Kingdom is eternal, then



the One who sits on its throne must be eternal. *“I will be His Father and He will be My Son”* (v.14).

This grand prophecy that the Messiah is the eternal Son of God is the foundation for successive prophecies regarding the Christ’s person (e.g. Psalm 2, 45, 72, 89, 110, 132, 2 Samuel 23, Isaiah 9:7, 49:8). It is beautiful to witness how the Old Testament believers “saw Christ’s day” through these prophecies. For example, David hearing this prophecy responds, as Luther translated it: *“Who am I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? . . . You have spoken of Your servant’s house for a great while to come. **This is the manner of a man who is the Lord GOD**”* (אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, 2 Samuel 7:18f).<sup>2</sup>

But some may, indeed, be wondering, “If this is prophesying Christ, how do the words in v. 14 apply to Jesus?” *“If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.”* Jesus, at the very beginning of His ministry, applies this prophecy to Himself: *“You will destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up”* (John 2:19). Jesus explains that God’s own temple/house would be built by destroying the temple of His body. God fully laid the sins of the world on Christ so that He calls them Christ’s own iniquity (Isaiah 53). *“God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us”* (2 Corinthians 5:21). The rods and blows of men nailed Jesus to the cross where He was forsaken of God—crucified for the sins of the world. So, by this death of His temple, He built the Temple in which God dwells with man eternally. There is no eternal temple of this world. Will we complacently take Christ’s glorious Temple, the only eternal one, for granted?

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<sup>2</sup> The bolded text is where Luther’s translation differs from the New King James’ Version and many others. Variance even appears in publications of Luther’s Bible translation. Online versions of Luther’s 1545 German Bible (biblegateway.com, biblestudytools.com) do not contain German that would suggest the translation offered above (und das nach Menschenweise, HERR HERR!) However, print versions (e.g. Britische und Ausländische Biblegesellschaft, Berlin, 1903) do have German text supporting the translation (Das ist eine Weise eines Menschen, der GOtt der HErr ist.) The Luther translation above also appears in other writings (Luther’s Works Volume XII, p. 196 and Volume XX, pp. 1921-24). While we cannot fully explain the variances in the publications of Luther’s German translation, there is documentation that he understood the verse in this way. The author of this article adds, “I believe it [is] a valid translation substantiated by cross references and the New Testament fulfillment.”

Yes, we also make offers, and they are rejected. How often haven't we done something, said something we think beneficial for friends, only to find them vehemently upset by it? How often have we spoken up to defend God, we're sure we have it right, only for it to be demonstrated that we actually contradicted a teaching of Scripture? How often have you, as I, been convinced we were witnessing to someone exactly what God wanted, yet it produced exactly the opposite of God's will? Have you, as I, promoted a program or a change at your church or with our church body, convinced it would make a positive improvement, and it did the opposite? We can't build the eternal temple. Our attempts to build an earthly temple to God, all too often, collapse in ruin.

David's royal family line was almost obliterated because of rebellion that brought God's curse. But God graciously preserved a cut-off stump, and in the fullness of time He brought forth a shoot from the stump of David (Isaiah 11:1; Galatians 4:4). Gabriel announced Messiah's birth to Mary referring to the words of this prophecy in 2 Samuel 7, "*He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end*" (Luke 1:33).

In His resurrection on the third day, Jesus raised up the living Temple that David could not build, that we cannot build, that God must build for him and us. It is the Temple built by grace alone, built by the Holy Spirit within all who believe in Jesus, a Temple built of living stones. For this reason, the apostle Paul wrote, "*Do you not know that you are the temples of the Living God?*" (2 Corinthians 6:16).

Thanksgiving poured from David's heart. He wrote psalms of praise specifically about this promise. He prepared an immeasurable wealth of materials to help Solomon build a temple that would glorify the Lord GOD. David did not draw back in resentment because his offering was rejected. He rather rejoiced in this eternal, living Temple of peace with God which no man can build. He joyfully furthered the marvelous building plans of Yahweh, and on his deathbed, David confessed, "*This everlasting covenant is my salvation*" (2 Samuel 23:5).

For which temple are we living? Check out your priorities. Is the building of the temple of your life in this world taking priority over Christ's living Temple, or are you seizing opportunities to hear, learn, and inwardly digest God's Word? Are we expending our treasures of time and life to remain a part of God's marvelous living Temple and to enable the same for generations to come? Every board and boulder in the temples of this world will crumble

under the cavalcade of cannon or time. Only Christ's Temple stands and lives forever. The Lord Jehovah GOD came with a strong hand! Prophecy was fulfilled. Paradise was secured. Let us exalt the good tidings together!

### **The zeal of the LORD performs this.**

The Lord Jehovah GOD came with a strong hand! Yahweh wants a people who believe on Him (1 Peter 2:6). This is impossible by our reasoning or effort. But the Holy Spirit holds out a gift, *"For unto us a Child is born"* (Isaiah 9:6). Christmas joy opens our eyes and hearts. Yet, the context of this amazing prophecy speaks not about the joys of a precious baby, but bondage. The setting is not about delight in life, but the darkness of death—judgment. Assyria would soon afflict Judah and ravish Israel. Yet, *"Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined"* (Isaiah 9:2). At the fullness of time, Galilee, as foretold here, was still overrun by the gentiles. Yet, Christmas still came. In the darkness, they are called to rejoice, *"As in the day of Midian"* (Isaiah 9:3,4, cf. Judges 7).

The "day of Midian" too was a day of darkness. Midian pillaged Israel's land like a swarm of locusts. Lest Israel would think her hand had won the victory, or even made any real contribution, the Lord sent the majority of the army home. He kept only 300, not to win the fight, but to see *Him* win the fight. They went out in the night with trumpets and torches covered with clay pitchers. The zeal of the LORD won their victory. Using this example, God assured Israel in Isaiah's day that despite the Assyrian invasion, Christmas would come.

Imagine yourself in a similar situation. America is invaded, and all who survive are hauled away in chains. This happened to Israel. We deserve it no less. Even in the face of national disaster, King Ahaz would not put his trust in the Lord's promises about the virgin-born Immanuel. Similar to King Ahaz, when facing national or personal disaster, how often do we fail to trust the Lord? Are we despairing, or trusting in man, or perhaps relying on the strength of America to revitalize our economy, win our battles, establish security in our schools, restore the light?

Such despair or trust in man is what brought the darkness and death of the Assyrian invasion. But, *"For unto us a Child is born"* (Isaiah 9:6). As in the day of Midian, He alone would remove the distress and oppression. Did you note whose child this is? He is identified in Isaiah 9:6 not as God's, or Mary and Joseph's child, but ours: *"Unto us."* This is *your* child to take into *your* arms

wherever you go. He is *your* child to hold in *your* heart forever. Because He took our human nature, your child was able to take your place suffering the bondage of sin, the gloom of Hell, the darkness of death in the divine punishment for all of your sins. Because He is your child, He is able to establish the gospel verdict—His perfect righteousness is yours.

*“And the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor”* (Isaiah 9:6 ESV). This is the wonder child—God and man personally united in Him. We are the ravaged refugees. Sin’s distress and death’s oppression pillage our lives. In the very midst of distress, He draws us to His cross to work a wonder in our heart. It is the wonder of peace—your sins are forgiven, the wonder of joy—your heavenly Father works all things for your good, and the wonder of hope—paradise is open for you.

He is *“Mighty God”* (Isaiah 9:6), our war hero. He shattered the Midianites before the trumpets sounded. He came as your child to shatter the strongholds of death with the shattering of the clay vessel of His own human body. Christ’s divine light was hidden in the earthen vessel of flesh and blood—a vessel which was shattered on the cross when God set the very sword of our sins’ deserved death against Him. And when that clay vessel was shattered, the light of His divine life flickered out, and Satan rejoiced. But then the light flashed and flamed in the gloom because the Mighty God—our war hero—devoured death, not vice versa.

He is *“Everlasting Father”* (Isaiah 9:6). He is the One, who with the Father and the Spirit, has ruled from eternity and created all things, and He is the father, source, and provider of everlasting life. His resurrection is the trumpet call proclaiming the enemy’s rout—you have the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life.

For all of this, the arisen Son of Man has received the scepter of the eternal Kingdom from the Ancient of Days. He is the *“Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end”* (Isaiah 9:6). The staff of sin still prods and pokes us to take control of our life, but Jesus’ grace breaks its control, giving peace. The rod of the law still beats us with its curse, but Jesus’ grace breaks every curse, giving peace. The yoke of death still seeks to hold us, but Jesus’ grace sets us free, giving peace.

*“Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever”* (Isaiah 9:7). This is the gospel verdict of God’s justification in Christ. You are covered with

His own righteousness. *“For unto us a Child is born.”* This is the eternal Light bursting into the primordial darkness of our sin. All of this is accomplished by the Lord GOD as Isaiah foretold, *“The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this”* (Isaiah 9:7).

### **The ultimate prophecy: I, your Redeemer, shall live.**

The Lord Jehovah GOD came with a strong hand foretelling resurrection! Who else has declared such a wonder? Yahweh wants a people who live and are never put to shame (1 Peter 2:6). But this, too, is impossible by our reasoning or effort. How easily we are pulled into the darkness! Have you seen that darkness in personal ways? Machiavellian abuse, financial cataclysm, friends’ betrayal, and how many more? With Job’s wife, we would curse God. With Job’s friends, we would curse Job. With Job, we would curse life. How many of us have watched a loved one die? Day by day we saw health, strength, and reason draining from him until he did not know what was happening. Moans and groans filled the night. Our crying out was “unanswered.” Death’s icy grip closed tighter and tighter. Its darkness was overwhelming. That same icy grip is coming for each of us. This life is but a brief dash from womb to tomb. Yes, how easily we are pulled into the darkness.

Bible critics often argue that the Old Testament knows nothing about a resurrection from the dead, and they use this argument to declare that the account of Jesus’ resurrection is just a myth. However, there are no fewer than twenty-eight Old Testament references foretelling Jesus’ resurrection and ours through Him.<sup>3</sup>

For me, one more Old Testament resurrection text is the ultimate. Possessions were lost. Career was lost. Family was lost. Health was lost. Popularity was lost. The “friends” who remained, Job wished would be lost. One thing was not lost, *“Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! That they were engraved on a rock With an iron pen and lead, forever!”* (Job 19:23-24).

Though his own grave loomed over Job, stinging with the venom of his sin, condemning with the unassailable strength of divine law; though friends considered him an outcast and a heathen; Job wanted an engraving in rock—a

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<sup>3</sup> Genesis 5:24; 25:8; 35:29; 49:9,33; Exodus 3:6; Numbers 23:10; 2 Samuel 7:12-16; 12:22-23; Psalm 16:8-1; 17:15; 22:22; 23:4-6; 68:18; 110:4; 116:15; 118:19-25; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Isaiah 9:2; 16:8-11; 25:8-9; 26:19; 53:10-12; Daniel 7:13,14; Hosea 6:1-2; 13:14; Jonah 2:10

monument declaring that he was not an outcast to His Redeemer. Jesus had proved this, vowing to become Job's substitute, bearing his sin, his guilt, his sickness, his ridicule and scorn, even his death. Yes, this Redeemer vowed to pay the price of His holy, precious blood to buy Job and you out of the bondage of sin and death. Yes, this Redeemer delivered the blow that crushed Satan's head. Job invites us to engrave it in granite: Jesus is "*my Redeemer.*"

The one thing not lost is the sure and certain foundation, for behind his own looming grave Job saw an open grave, an exit from the tomb. "*For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth*" (Job 19:25). Yes, "*my Redeemer lives.*" Vain was the stone and Roman seal. Vain was proud Rome's guard and death's strong hold. Jesus, having vanquished death, dispatched an angel to reveal the tomb was empty. Disdainfully, the angel flicked away the Roman seal and with a glance sent the guards sprawling comatose to the ground. By faith Job saw the rock-solid guarantee that Jesus has conquered sin, death, and the devil. At the empty tomb is the granite-engraved assurance that Job was not cast off, but redeemed. "Jesus lives" sets hearts ablaze with the joy of forgiveness won, righteousness acquired, fiery divine judgment quenched, Satan's accusations silenced, and his dominion toppled. This Hell-shattering triumph gives us an eternal foundation so secure it cannot be shaken. His victory can never, no never, be undone. What does it say? "He shall stand at last on the earth." Nothing shall prevent the bells of Heaven pealing this victory for eternity, "*My Redeemer lives.*"

Because Jesus' grave is eternally empty, Job's grave would also open. "*And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*" (Job 19:26f). The number of first person pronouns is noteworthy, "*I know . . . I see. My Redeemer . . . my eyes . . . my heart . . . my flesh shall see God.*" Job knew that his body would soon be ashes to ashes and dust to dust. He did not know how many centuries it would be until his dust and ash again took form and his spirit once again filled his own skin and flesh. But, he knew it would come, just as certainly as Jesus is risen from death, lives, and reigns to all eternity. He saw it in granite before him. Take up that personal pronoun for yourself, "*My Redeemer lives.*"

Possessions, career, family, health, popularity were lost. Job had buried all of his children. Because of the one thing not lost, he did not need to be lost in grief. He did not need to be lost in guilt because he couldn't prevent it and had not even been able to say goodbye. He would soon say, "Hey, great to see you

again.” He could say with David, *“I shall go to [them]”* (2 Samuel 12:23). I shall join the host in white around the throne of Christ in the most glorious family reunion and cast my crown at Jesus’ feet (Revelation 4:10, 7:13).

No wonder Job wanted it engraved in stone. He wanted it impressed on every fiber of his being to hold on to, to give him strength as he passed through every tribulation. “He is not a fool, who gives up what he cannot keep, to keep what he cannot lose.”<sup>4</sup>

Live the life that lasts. Live to hear Jesus say to you, “Come up here,” and be lifted to dwell at His side in His eternal triumph--to enter with Him into His eternal temple. The Lord Jehovah GOD came with a strong hand! Prophecy is fulfilled. Paradise is secured. Let the light shine, let it blaze to the glory of Christ. Read it, embrace it, join the triumph shout (Revelation 11:15) with all the saints and angels: “I know that my Redeemer lives.”

I know that my Redeemer lives;  
 What comfort this sweet sentence gives!  
 He lives, He lives, who once was dead;  
 He lives, my ever-living Head.

He lives triumphant from the grave,  
 He lives eternally to save,  
 He lives all glorious in the sky,  
 He lives exalted there on high!

He lives and grants me daily breath;  
 He lives, and I shall conquer death;  
 He lives my mansion to prepare;  
 He lives to bring me safely there.

He lives, all glory to His name!  
 He lives, my Jesus, still the same.  
 Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives:  
 “I know that my Redeemer lives!”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Jim Elliot journal entry for October 28, 1949, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim\\_Elliot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Elliot)

<sup>5</sup> *The Lutheran Hymnal*, (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 200:1,2,7,8

## Messianic Prophecies and Fulfillments

Scripture regularly cites fulfillment of prophecy as powerful proof that Jesus is the Messiah, our perfect Savior.

|   | <b>Old Testament Prophecy</b>                 | <b>New Testament Fulfillment</b>                                       |
|---|---|--|
| Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem                   | <i>Micah 5:2</i>                              | <i>Matthew 2:1-6;</i><br><i>Luke 2:1-20</i>                            |
| Messiah was to be born of a virgin                    | <i>Isaiah 7:14</i>                            | <i>Matthew 1:18-25;</i><br><i>Luke 1:26-38</i>                         |
| Messiah was to be a prophet like Moses                | <i>Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19</i>               | <i>John 7:40</i>   |
| Messiah was to enter Jerusalem in triumph             | <i>Zechariah 9:9</i>                          | <i>Matthew 21:1-9;</i><br><i>John 12:12-16</i>                         |
| Messiah was to be rejected by His own people          | <i>Isaiah 53:1,3;</i><br><i>Psalms 118:22</i> | <i>Matthew 26:3-4;</i><br><i>John 12:37-43;</i>                        |
| Messiah was to be betrayed by one of His followers    | <i>Psalms 41:9</i>                            | <i>Matthew 26:14-16, 47-50;</i><br><i>Luke</i>                         |
| Messiah was to be tried and condemned                 | <i>Isaiah 53:8</i>                            | <i>Luke 23:1-25;</i><br><i>Matthew 27:1-2</i>                          |
| Messiah was to be silent before His accusers          | <i>Isaiah 53:7</i>                            | <i>Matthew 27:12-14;</i><br><i>Mark 15:3-4;</i><br><i>Luke 23:8-10</i> |
| Messiah was to be struck and spat upon by His enemies | <i>Isaiah 50:6</i>                            | <i>Matthew 26:67;</i><br><i>27:30;</i><br><i>Mark 14:65</i>            |
| Messiah was to be mocked and insulted                 | <i>Psalms 22:7-8</i>                          | <i>Matthew 27:39-44;</i><br><i>Luke 23:11,35</i>                       |
| Messiah was to die by crucifixion                     | <i>Psalms 22:14, 16-17</i>                    | <i>Matthew 27:31;</i><br><i>Mark 15:20, 25</i>                         |



|   | <b>Old Testament<br/>Prophecy</b>  | <b>New Testament<br/>Fulfillment</b>         |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Messiah was to suffer with criminals and pray for His enemies | <i>Isaiah 53:12</i>                | <i>Matthew 27:38;<br/>Mark 15:27-28;</i>     |
| Messiah was to be given vinegar                               | <i>Psalms 69:21</i>                | <i>Matthew 27:34;<br/>John 19:28-30</i>      |
| Others were to cast lots for Messiah's garments               | <i>Psalms 22:178</i>               | <i>Matthew 27:35;<br/>John 19:23-24</i>      |
| Messiah's bones were not to be broken                         | <i>Exodus 12:46</i>                | <i>John 19:31-36</i>                         |
| Messiah was to die as a sacrifice for sin                     | <i>Isaiah 53:5-6, 8,<br/>10-12</i> | <i>John 1:29; 11:49-<br/>52; Acts 10:43;</i> |
| Messiah was to be raised from the dead                        | <i>Psalms 16:10</i>                | <i>Matthew 28:1-10;<br/>Acts 2:22-32</i>     |
| Messiah is now at God's right hand                            | <i>Psalms 110:1</i>                | <i>Mark 16:19; Luke<br/>24:50-51</i>         |

A more extensive list of Messianic Prophecies and Fulfillments can be accessed at [journaloftheology.org](http://journaloftheology.org) (under the "Topic Focus" tab).



# The Lord GOD Comes to Feed His Flock like a Shepherd

David M. Ude

My dad has big hands. Seriously, they're huge. Go shake his hand and you'll know what I'm talking about. All small children think their dad is the strongest. When they get older they realize that it is not true. I am still pretty sure my Dad could beat up all of your dads. As one of his children, I have had the bird's eye view to see that strength on many occasions. I have also had the perfect perch from which to witness how gentle those strong hands are.

There are plenty of men in the world who are strong. Sadly, there are plenty of husbands who use that strength to abuse their wives, plenty of fathers who use it to mistreat their children, and far too many men who think strength is the entire sum of manliness. I can never be thankful enough to God for a father who is a real man—strong *and* gentle.

There's just something perfectly poignant about that combination. What's cuter than a strong father holding a tiny baby? What is as touching a husband's large, rough hand, tenderly holding his bride's smooth and slender one? I have seen my Dad's big hands doing both of those things. Every night he and Mom went for a walk, hand-in-hand; and as Mom's body wasted away, Dad's strength gently carried her. Now my little daughters cling to "Opa," and he gently holds them.

It is the same with Christ.

*"He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young."*

**Isaiah 40:11** (ESV)

## The Good Shepherd Lives.

A great number of passages in which Jesus is called "Shepherd" directly speak of His resurrection. All of the remaining passages do so indirectly. John 10:11-18 is a favorite "shepherd passage."

*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I*

*know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father (ESV)."*

Hands don't get any bigger or stronger than that. Only Jesus can say, "*I have authority to lay down my life and I have authority to take it up again.*" Neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit can say that because they cannot die. They did not take on human flesh, but Jesus did. This man Jesus is God. In this man, God died. At the same time no other man can say this because none of us can say "No one takes my life from me" or "I have authority to take it up again." It is an entirely unique statement, and it is why Jesus says, "I am the shepherd, the good one." There is no other like him because He is God and man, because He is powerful and tender, because He is strong and gracious, because He is exalted and humble.

Jesus tells us that His death and resurrection is the essence of what it means for Him to be Shepherd. He is the *Good Shepherd* because He died for us, but that alone would not be enough. A dead shepherd is no shepherd—which is exactly why death and the devil so gleefully thought to devour Him on the cross. With the shepherd dead, they could snatch and tear the flock with ease. Fools! Didn't they know what happens when death swallows life? Didn't they know exactly what sort of Shepherd this was? He is man and God, gentle and strong, humble and exalted! When Jesus says "I am the Good Shepherd," He is applying every passage which speaks about God as Shepherd to Himself. He is also teaching us that "Shepherd" means "Lamb"—the one who was dead and now lives forevermore.

At the very heart of every passage which calls Jesus our Shepherd is both the cross and the empty tomb. Every Christian can say with David, "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me.*" (Psalm 23:4). The book of Revelation beautifully declares "*The Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes*" (Revelation 7:17 ESV). He is with you! He is both strong and gentle—as lamb and lion—by crucifixion and resurrection. "*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*"

For the sheep the Lamb hath bled, Alleluia!  
 Sinless in the sinners' stead. Alleluia!  
 "Christ is risen," today we cry; Alleluia!  
 Now He lives no more to die. Alleluia!

Christ, the Victim undefiled, Alleluia!  
 God and man hath reconciled Alleluia!  
 While in strange and awe-full strife Alleluia!  
 Met together Death and Life: Alleluia!<sup>1</sup>

### The Shepherd King

Before His crucifixion Jesus said, *"Now is the judgment of this world, now will the ruler of this world be cast out"* (John 12:31 ESV). The word imprinted on His cross was fitting: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." This was where the Romans wrote the crimes of the accused—the reason for their crucifixion. "King of the Jews" was the charge that had been brought against Him.

The Jews knew that a charge of blasphemy wouldn't succeed in a Roman court. They who rejected Him as their king because they knew He didn't want to be an earthly king, accused Him of claiming to be an earthly king in order to crucify Him. "King" was the charge they brought against him. It was false in their mouths, but true in a sense much deeper than they knew. He was crucified specifically because He was a King in truth and indeed the King of Truth.

Psalm 22 is perhaps the most specific and detailed prophecy of Jesus' crucifixion, and it ends with these words calling Him King.

*Kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it* (Psalm 22:28-31 ESV).

The Passion of Jesus is filled with supreme and beautiful irony. He could have called upon twelve legions of angels for deliverance, but instead, He willingly laid down His life, and this was His Kingly work. The soldiers put a

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<sup>1</sup> *The Lutheran Hymnal*, (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 191:2-3

purple robe on Him and a twisted cruel crown on His sacred head to mock Him, but in this we see true royalty. They lift Him up on the cross thinking to conquer and shame Him, but He finds His greatest glory in this shame and He is the one who conquered by being conquered! It was a Trojan Cross—death swallowed Him whole and Satan eagerly welcomed the opportunity to destroy the Son of God, but death didn't realize what it was swallowing when it ravenously wolfed down each morsel. Neither the devil nor the world recognized the King of kings and Lord of lords in this man of sorrows. The King is the head crusher, the mighty right arm of the Lord. Death was eating its death. Satan was partying at his own wake.

This is all bound up in that word “Shepherd.” To say that Jesus is King is to say that He will die and rise. It is to say that He is Shepherd. Indeed, throughout the Old Testament, especially from the time of David onward, the term “Shepherd” is a royal term.

**Psalms 78:70-71** (ESV) — *He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob his people, Israel his inheritance.*

**Ezekiel 34:23** (ESV) — *And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.*

**Micah 5:2,4** (ESV) — *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. . . . And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.*

This promised Conqueror will be true God since he will be “from ancient days.” He will be true man since He will come “from Bethlehem.” He will be King since He will be a shepherd, and thus His kingdom will be a shepherd's kingdom—a kingdom both strong and gentle.

### **The Shepherd's Kingdom**

Yes, Jesus is our Shepherd-King and His Kingdom will never end. *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,*

*Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this” (Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV).*

Our Shepherd won His kingdom with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, with blood and suffering and pain on the cross. “A king who dies on the cross must be king of a rather strange kingdom.”<sup>2</sup> Now and forever His Kingdom consists in gently dispensing the fruits of that suffering to his lambs.

Isaiah’s words speak about the resurrection of Christ in another way. *“He will shepherd his flock.”* The verb “shepherd” refers to an ongoing work. It has a beginning point and then continues indefinitely. Such is Christ’s shepherding. We’ve seen how Christ could not shepherd us if He didn’t both die and rise, but there is yet more in these words. His shepherding means that He is continually applying the benefits of His death and resurrection to us, His sheep. His shepherding is His reign, it is His Kingdom—a Kingdom of grace and peace.

So often the kings of the earth cannot do both. It is either war or peace. It is either strength or gentleness. We know how to fight, but then we don’t know how to be at peace. Or we know how to be at peace, but then we cannot figure how to fight when needed. David was a man of blood and Solomon was a king of peace. Christ is both.

His Kingdom is described in the briefest and most tender of pictures. *“He will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.”* That phrase perfectly describes the work of Christ’s Kingdom of grace. Right now He gathers us, holds us, gently leads us. He does it all through His gospel.

*“He will tend his flock like a shepherd”* refers to the entire New Testament age. It is the “last days” in which *“God has spoken to us by his Son”* (Hebrews 1:2), the time in which He shepherds His flock through the means of grace. Beyond that it also refers to the age to come. As we read in Revelation, *“He will guide them to springs of living water”* (Revelation 7:17 ESV).

Although we are still here in this valley of the shadow of death, our Shepherd has risen. He has already won. This means our true life is hidden in

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<sup>2</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, <http://www.azquotes.com/quote/863919>

Christ, as Paul says, *“in [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3). Just as He has been seated at the right hand of God, so we are “seated with him in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 2:6 ESV). By faith we are now where He is. We have now what He has. We are now what He is. We are with Him by faith and He is with us in grace, holding us in His bosom.*

What this looks like in practical terms is clearly seen in John 20:19-23 (ESV).

*On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”*

This is the invisible Holy Christian Church as close to visible as it can be on this side of Heaven. In this moment it is perfectly described. Christ stood in the midst of His people. As He predicted in Psalm 22:22 (ESV), *“I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”* As He said in Matthew 18:20, *“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”* This is also just what David said in Psalm 23:4, *“I will fear no evil for You are with me!”*

Gathered there are the men through whom Christ will continue to shepherd His flock. On them He will send His Spirit to bring to their remembrance all the things He commanded them (John 14:26). He breathes out His Spirit upon them—the Spirit who fills His Word. Thus through these gathered men He will breathe out that Word to be written and preserved so that when we gather around those words which are spirit and life (John 6:63), it is exactly the same as on that first Easter evening. Jesus is there, at the font, at the altar, in the Word, in the midst of His congregation. Jesus is here. Oh, blessed promise and grace that our Lord should come to us sinners, that He should stoop to lift us up in his arms! See how gentle He is! He comes in no lightning and thunder and so we pray,

Come not in terrors as the King of kings,  
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings,  
Tears for all woes, a heart for ev'ry plea.  
Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me.<sup>3</sup>

Serving the sheep with the gospel in Word and sacrament is the ongoing shepherding work of Christ our Savior. *“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen”* (Hebrews 13:20-21 ESV).

This is Christ equipping us, working in us. These are ongoing things which He works through His Word and sacrament. And He dispenses these, with gentle hands, through His Church.

### **Gentle Hands — Hands On**

Christ is a Shepherd-King. This means He is very “hands-on.” Sometimes it can be a bad thing for a king to be too involved. He gets his hands into everything without actually knowing what he is doing, and he creates more harm than good. This is how you and I are. We often seek to micro-manage because we think only we can do it the right way, and we do this even when we have no idea what we are actually doing or talking about. Usually, it is better for a king to wisely appoint experts who know their business and let them use their expertise. Our King, Christ, uses both approaches, but with perfect knowledge and holiness.

Stand next to the disciples in that upper room where trembling and fear have given way to unbelievable joy. Listen to the words Jesus speaks, for these words are spoken to every Christian. They are spoken to you. *“Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”* A word of forgiveness from one Christian to another is the gentle touch of those strong hands. It is Christ’s Word of forgiveness. It is hands on.

The pastoral ministry reflects this. I have never cared for the term, *Reverend*. It is certainly true that pastors are to be respected, but I have enough pride in my heart already without adding a title like that to stir the pot.

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<sup>3</sup> *The Lutheran Hymnal*, (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 552:4



In contrast, I love one of the words that the scriptures most often use for this office, namely, “pastor,” i.e., shepherd.

**1 Peter 5:2-4** (ESV) — *Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”*

**Acts 20:28** (ESV) — *Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”*

These two passages wonderfully remind earthly shepherds of two things: 1) I am to be a shepherd—strong and gentle in the Word, clothed with humility, and abiding in the grace of Christ. 2) I myself have the Shepherd who truly is all of these things and the example by which “shepherd” is defined. Therefore, when I so often do not measure up, He is there to carry me with all His flock in His bosom. What a model for ministry and what a comfort, too!

To be a shepherd means to have a pastoral, individual, hands-on approach. The shepherd knows His sheep personally. He calls them each by name. He knows their weaknesses, their fears, their guilt, their struggles, and their needs. He knows just which word to speak in due season to him who is weary (Isaiah 50:4). He knows when to carry the lamb and when to gently lead those with young. He knows when and how to bind up their wounds. Even while Christ delegates this work to pastors, parents, teachers, and friends, He micro-manages every detail Himself. *“No one shall snatch them out of my hands”* (John 10:27-28 ESV). He offers a gentle, sure promise to you. He delivers fierce fighting words to your foes. When Christ the Good Shepherd micro-manages, that is a very good thing!

This is the Shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine in the open country to find one lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7). The point is not that Christ leaves the ninety-nine. It is that He goes to find the one—that He cares for each sheep individually. Since this is that great Shepherd of the sheep who died and now lives forever, He can easily go searching for a million different lost sheep at the same time. He is strong. He is gentle. He is personal.

This pastoral approach is evident in the way Christ treats the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28). He pretended to ignore her. He pretended not to care in order to test her faith and thus strengthen her in His word and promises.

Jesus ministered to the young lawyer in a similar way (Matthew 19:16-22). This man who came to Jesus very earnestly desired to know the way to Heaven. He believed the way to his goal was his own works. He believed he had already done all of the works which the law commanded. Jesus, with a Shepherd's great love and deft touch, gave him a command He knew the man would not obey. *"Go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me"* (Matthew 19:21). The man went away sad because he had great possessions. Jesus knew this man's idol. Jesus knew the man's sins, and He was endeavoring to make him realize what he could not do. Jesus used the law in order to show the man his sin so that he might come to Jesus, not as a law-giver, but as a savior.

Christ uses this same approach with us. His law condemns our sins and shows us our idols. It shows us the greatest gaps in our own self-righteous picture of ourselves. It wakes you up from the delusion of thinking you are good enough because you did one thing, or because you did not do another. Of what are you most proud in yourself? Christ seeks to break this with the law so that He then may gather you in His gentle arms.

This is the same pastoral approach which Christ calls upon us to have toward one another—to be strong, gentle, and wise in the Word; to deal with each person in love and understanding. There are no cookie cutter approaches. There is no one-size-fits-all process, but there is a one-size-fits-all savior who paid for all sins, for all people, for all time!

Christ calls and empowers weak and sinful people to be His hands for His lambs. This does not at all mean that He gives all the work over to us and then goes and sits on a throne somewhere. His sitting on His throne is an active ruling, a filling of all things, an energetic and powerful working in all His believers, through His Spirit in Word and sacrament. It is Christ taking those big strong hands of His and lifting up His lambs to His bosom—millions of them at once! Each one receives His personal, pastoral care. Each one has the lamb's eye view of His gentle strength.

What a comfort this is to each of us lambs. What a comfort to us who are among the lambs but also pastors. Christ places His Word in our hands to use, but we ourselves are in His hands! He Himself works for us and through us, He preaches to us and through us, and forgives us and others through us. He holds each of us, gently gathering the weak and the lame, binding up our wounds, comforting our sad and lonely hearts. He steadfastly searches after each lost and straying sheep and gently leads those who are with young. He

does it all with those big scarred hands. Hands which bear the marks of love. Hands on which He has engraved your name (Isaiah 49:16 ESV).

As you grow weak and when your strength fails, He will gently carry you in *His* strength. He Himself will lay your body in the grave and welcome your soul into paradise. The hands that tore death to pieces will one day gather your body torn by death's destruction, and He will carefully, lovingly put it back together and raise it up to glory.

My Dad really is the strongest. He is the Everlasting God, the Mighty one whose Son conquered death. He is also the gentlest, the Shepherd who has always led me true. In His Son, my Brother Jesus, my Shepherd, eternal strength and endless compassion are joined in one. He laid down His life and took it up again that He might take you and me up in His strong and gentle embrace forever. You are a part of His flock, but you are not just a face in the crowd. You are His lamb. He holds you personally, and from that vantage point—held in His strong and gentle hands—you have the lamb's eye view to see Your Savior, to behold your God.

Christ, our good and faithful shepherd, Watching all Your lambs and sheep;  
Christ the gate that guards the sheepfold, Never-failing vigil keep.  
When we stray, Good Shepherd, seek us, Find us, lift us, bear us home;  
Lamb of God, our shepherd keep us; Let us hear Your voice alone.

Christ, the Alpha and Omega, Christ, the firstborn from the dead,  
Christ, the life and resurrection, Christ the Church's glorious head:  
Praise and thanks and adoration And unending worship be  
To the Father and the Spirit And to You eternally.<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>4</sup> Steven Mueller, ©2001. Used by permission. *Lutheran Service Book*, (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 540:4,6

## Panorama

### **Church of the Lutheran Confession 2018 Resolution Concerning the *Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship***

We thank the Lord of the Church for giving the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) the opportunity to study His Word further regarding church fellowship. We continue to rely on His direction through the Holy Spirit. We trust that His will shall be done and that He will provide us opportunities to give faithful witness of His teachings to all the world.

We are thankful for the progress that has been made over the past several years during the inter-synodical discussions on the doctrine of separation from a false teaching church body with representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS).

1. WHEREAS the Lord directs that we agree on the doctrinal principles of His Word (1 Cor. 1:10) and obligate ourselves to build our teachings on those principles; and
2. WHEREAS the establishment of the CLC became necessary due to the false teaching that arose within the ELS and WELS regarding the doctrinal principles of separation from false-teaching church bodies; and
3. WHEREAS after years of study of Holy Scripture and formal discussions with the ELS and WELS a *Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship* has been formulated and circulated throughout the CLC, ELS, and WELS for review and scrutiny; and
4. WHEREAS the representatives of the CLC, ELS, and WELS have agreed that the *Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship* is a scripturally sound presentation; and

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<sup>1</sup> *Church of the Lutheran Confession Proceedings of the Thirty-third Convention*, p. 11, 47

WHEREAS the CLC Board of Doctrine and the 2017 CLC General Pastoral Conference, though not recommending adoption<sup>1</sup>

1. have found nothing unscriptural in the *Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship*, and
2. WHEREAS the *Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship* reflects the doctrinal principles which are expressed in the CLC's confessional statement *Concerning Church Fellowship*; and
3. WHEREAS the *Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship* agrees with the *CLC Theses and Antitheses on the Role of Admonition in the Termination of Fellowship with Church Bodies* authored by the CLC Board of Doctrine in 1990; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that we acknowledge with joy that the *Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship* is a scripturally sound presentation of doctrinal principles when dealing with the termination of fellowship.

1. WHEREAS the *Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship* does **NOT** resolve all of the issues involving the doctrine of church fellowship, including but not limited to, official statements and practices that are in conflict with the Joint Statement, and "In a State of Confession"/protesting fellowship (*In Statu Confessionis*), and
2. WHEREAS there are other doctrinal issues that continue to separate us, including but not limited to, membership in Thrivent and also the role of women in society, and
3. WHEREAS it is our heartfelt desire to work toward a restoration of God-pleasing fellowship with the ELS and WELS based upon a unity of doctrine and practice, therefore be it

RESOLVED that we ask the President of the CLC to relay our hope that the talks with the ELS and WELS can continue.

1. WHEREAS the 2018 Convention did not adopt nor did it reject the *Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship*, and
2. WHEREAS we see the *Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship* as a scripturally sound presentation on the topic, but we still have some questions and concerns, therefore, be it further

RESOLVED that we aim for a final disposition of the *Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship* at the 2020 Convention. Therefore, be it further,

RESOLVED that we direct the 2019 General Pastoral Conference to discuss the “Difficulties that Remain” contained in the 2017 GPC recommendation concerning the *Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship*.

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## Four Points of Difference

In addition to the official convention resolution, Professor Paul Naumann prepared the following informal summary of differences between the Church of the Lutheran Confession and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS).

**QUESTION:** What are the main differences between the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) on the one hand, and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) on the other?

**ANSWER:** From the CLC perspective, the four main theological differences between the CLC and the WELS/ELS are the following:

### 1. Termination of fellowship with false teaching church bodies.

The CLC says that Romans 16:17-18 mandates separation, without delay, when a church body is “*causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned.*” The WELS/ELS claim to hold the same teaching, as evidenced by their adoption of the 2015 Joint Statement. However, many in the CLC say that the Joint Statement, though not unscriptural, is inadequate as a settlement of this issue. The document was not adopted at the 2018 CLC Convention and is still under study.

### 2. “In a State of Confession.”

This is closely related to point one. This phrase (Latin: *in statu confessionis*) has sometimes been used by the WELS/ELS to declare themselves in a state of “vigorously protesting fellowship” while failing to sever fellowship ties with a false-teaching church body. The CLC says this practice is unscriptural.

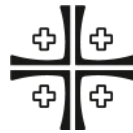
### 3. Thrivent.

Thrivent is a fraternal benefit society that offers insurance to its members and engages in extensive church work across many denominations. The CLC has identified *membership* in Thrivent as sinful unionism. The WELS/ELS view membership in Thrivent as a mere business transaction.

### 4. The role of women in society.

Both the CLC and the WELS/ELS uphold the Bible's headship principle as regards women's role in the church and home. The WELS, however, also extends this principle to society in general. The CLC says such a teaching goes beyond Scripture.

The foregoing are the main differences that separate us, though there are other areas of concern, such as triangular fellowship, the incursion of Church Growth methods, the doctrine of church and ministry, the moment of real presence in the Lord's Supper, and fundraising.



## In His Word

# The Doctrine of the Trinity Revealed in the Farewell Discourses of Jesus

*Paul M. Tiefel*

When we think of the Bible truth that the one and only true God is three persons in one godhead, there are probably some key passages that we are most accustomed to use. These familiar and time-tested passages have been impressed upon many of us since our childhood.

**Matthew 28:19** — *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

**2 Corinthians 13:14** — *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.*

**Numbers 6:24-26** — *The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.*

**Deuteronomy 6:4** — *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!*

**James 2:19** — *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!*

However, there is no section of Scripture that offers more specific information on the three persons of the Trinity than certain portions of John chapters 14, 15, and 16. These chapters are composed of words spoken by the Savior during the night before His death, and they are some of most precious words in all of Scripture.

When Jesus spoke these words, He was aware that His disciples were about to be thrust into great turmoil because of His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Their faith in Him would be shaken to the core, and they would scatter in fear for their own lives. Looking further into the future, they would have to adapt to the withdrawal of His visible presence when He ascended into Heaven. Knowing all of this, the Savior prepared His disciples for His



farewells before His death and before His ascension. As the Savior prepares His disciples in this way, He fills these chapters with many precious promises, such as:

*Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also (14:1-3).*

*If you ask anything in My name, I will do it (14:14).*

*I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you (14:18).*

*Because I live, you will live also (14:19).*

*I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing (15:5).*

*Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you (16:23).*

*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world (16:33).*

The purpose of this study, however, is to focus on those sections in which Jesus refers to the three persons of the godhead. To highlight the three persons, we have underlined the references to the Father, [bracketed] the references to the Son and double-underlined the references to the Holy Spirit.

*[I] will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you (14:16-17).*

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in [My] name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that [I] said to you (14:26).*

*But when the Helper comes, whom [I] shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of [Me] (15:26).*

*Nevertheless [I] tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that [I] go away; for if [I] do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if [I] depart, [I] will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in [Me]; of righteousness, because [I] go to My Father and you see [Me] no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged (16:7-11).*

*“[I] still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify [Me], for He will take of what is [Mine] and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are [Mine]. Therefore [I] said that He will take of [Mine] and declare it to you (16:12-15).*

It is clear that the three persons coordinate their efforts for the salvation of the sinner. None acts alone, none acts independently of the other two. But take a closer look at what each person does.

### **The Father**

- The Father will give another Helper (Holy Spirit).
- The Father will send the Helper in the name of Jesus.
- Jesus will send the Spirit *from* the Father.
- The Spirit proceeds *from* the Father.
- All things of the Father belong to Jesus.

### **[The Son]**

- The Son will pray the Father to give/send the Spirit.
- The Son will send the Helper/Spirit from the Father.

It is worth noting that ἀποστέλλω, translated, “send,” goes beyond the concept of sending a gift or a card. It includes the idea of being sent on a mission. It is used of the Father sending the Son (John 3:17; 3:34; 5:36; 6:57; 8:42; 17:3,8,18,21,23,25; 20:21), and it is used of the Son sending us (John 17:18; 20:21), but it is *not* used with the sending of the Holy Spirit. Every time ἀποστέλλω is used, it involves the idea of being sent out with a specific

purpose. We could properly translate ἀποστέλλω as “commission.” Thus, the Son was commissioned to atone for the sins of the world, and the disciples of Jesus are commissioned to spread the Gospel.

Another word, πέμπω, is used for the sending of the Holy Spirit (14:26; 15:26). It is also used for the preaching of Jesus.

**The Spirit** (Notice how the action picks up and almost all of it is directed toward “us,” namely, believers.)

- The Spirit abides with us forever.
- The Spirit abides with and in us.
- The Spirit will teach all things.
- The Spirit will bring to remembrance all sayings of Jesus.
- The Spirit will testify of Jesus.
- The Spirit will come and convict the world.
- The Spirit will come to us.
- The Spirit will guide us into all truth.
- The Spirit will proclaim what He hears.
- The Spirit will tell us things to come.
- The Spirit will glorify Jesus.
- The Spirit will proclaim the things of Father/Son to us.

When these verses are studied in this way, we begin to see all that the Holy Spirit is sent to do for us. Clearly, in view of all this activity, it is impossible to deny the person of the Holy Spirit. It is also impossible to divert the work of the Spirit from placing Jesus into our hearts to somehow pointing to Himself. This diversion of the Spirit’s work occurs when certain gifts of the Spirit, such as faith-healing or speaking in tongues, are emphasized.

When we look closer at the Holy Spirit’s activity, we see that Jesus Himself takes us to the source of that activity.

*He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak (16:13)*

*He will take of what is [Mine] and declare it to you (16:14).*

We are taken back into eternity and into the council of the Holy God. The Spirit *hears* things. What things? Surely, He heard the sentences in the beginning, *“Let there be . . .”* (Genesis 1:3ff), when all things came into existence in six days through an orderly process by the power of the Word. He heard such words as, *“It is not good that man should be alone”* (Genesis 2:18) and witnessed the institution of marriage. With sorrow, the Spirit heard Adam and Eve confronted with the question of what they had done (Genesis 3:11,13). With great sorrow, the Spirit heard God’s judgment on the world and witnessed the worldwide flood that followed (Genesis 6:7). He heard when the Holy God had to conclude that the imagination of man’s heart simply and always is going to be evil from youth (Genesis 8:21), and when God spoke about stemming the tide of rebellion at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:6-8).

But the Spirit was also present in the council between Father and Son as their love for the world of sinners wrought a plan of salvation. That plan—the only perfect plan—was that the Son of God would become flesh, place Himself under the law, and exchange His holy life and innocent death for the sinful life and death of every sinner. What did the Holy Spirit *hear*? He heard all of this and more, and what He heard He spoke by inspiration into the writers of the Bible. Those divine conversations have been recorded for us to hear and read and study.

The Spirit of God also *received* the “belongings” of the Son and the Father. He did not receive material things such as belong to us, such as clothing, toys, books, cars, and such possessions.<sup>1</sup> What belongs to Father and Son? Think of really big treasures—the souls (and bodies) of sinners bought by the blood of Jesus.

*“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price”* (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

*“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”* (Revelation 5:12). The Holy Spirit is to take these belongings and place them into our hearts.

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<sup>1</sup>This is not to deny that everything in heaven and earth—even what we think belongs to us—really and truly belongs to the Creator (Psalm 24:1, James 1:17, et al)

Once the Spirit hears and once He receives, He gets very busy with mankind. His one and only action is directed toward the world. The Greek verb for the Spirit's activity with the world is ἐλέγχω which means "to expose, bring to light." The Spirit exposes three subjects to the world: 1) Sin, 2) Righteousness, and 3) Judgment.

First, the Spirit uses the law of God to reveal sin (Romans 3:20). The Spirit exposes what sin is. The light which the Spirit uses for this is the Word of God. Thus, sin is identified and exposed according to God's holy standard even if the world thinks otherwise. The sin mentioned in John 16:8 is further explained in the next verse. *"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin . . . because they do not believe in Me"* (John 16:8f). The Spirit exposes the world's lack of faith in Jesus.

Secondly, the Spirit brings righteousness to light. *"And when He has come, He will convict the world . . . of righteousness . . . because I go to My Father and you see Me no more"* (John 16:8,10). Jesus' going to the Father completes the mission on which He was sent, namely, to go to the world of lost sinners and obtain a righteousness that would avail before the Holy God. *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"* (2 Corinthians 5:21). The Spirit exposes to the world the vanity of seeking its own righteousness while also bringing to light the righteousness found in Jesus.

The third noun in the series is "judgment." *And when He has come, He will convict the world . . . of judgment . . . because the ruler of this world is judged"* (John 16:8,11).

To human eyes, the prince of this world—the devil—and the evil he promotes seem to prosper. It is necessary for the Spirit to expose this lie and reveal that, in reality, the devil has been totally defeated by Jesus.

The Spirit always ends up at the same point in this work with the world. That point is Jesus. The effect of this work is an aroma of life unto life for some and an aroma of death unto death for others (2 Corinthians 2:16). This work with the world of unbelievers results in some being converted to faith, and it results in others hardening themselves in unbelief.

God used one verb to describe the Spirit's action with the world, but He used *ten* verbs to describe His action with believers. One grouping involves His presence μένω, "abide, dwell, stay." This verb uses two prepositions to describe how the Spirit abides *with* (μετά, John 14:16) and *among* us (παρά, John 14:17).

The indwelling of the Spirit is added to that of the Father and the Son (John 14:23) and completes the thought of the believer being the temple, the dwelling of the Trinity (I Corinthians 6:19). Truly the Savior does not leave us alone. The Spirit is sent to us by the Father and the Son. The second verb (εἰμί, John 14:17) is translated “is” and when combined with the preposition, ἐν, “in connection with us.” He comes (ἔρχομαι, the third verb, John 15:26; 16:7,8,13), but not merely for a brief visit, but to *be at our side and inside of us now and forever.*

A second grouping of verbs deals with the teaching activity of the Spirit.

διδάσκω—teach

ὑπομνήσκω—bring to remembrance, remind, call to mind

μαρτυρέω—testify, bear witness, confirm

ὁδηγέω—guide, lead (lit. “lead the way”)

λαλέω—speak

ἀναγγέλλω—tell, announce, proclaim

δοξάζω—glorify

This rich variety of words certainly covers the vast work of the Holy Spirit, and they demonstrate that it takes more than one word to describe the activity of the Spirit. The various shades of meaning between the words help us to see the significance and brilliant array of the Spirit’s activity.

It is just as meaningful to see the nouns that go with the actions of the Spirit—all things, all sayings of Jesus, Jesus, into all truth, what the Spirit hears, things to come, the things of the Father and the Son.

Consider some of the threads of thought. One thread centers on Jesus (sayings of Jesus, Jesus, things of the Son). Do we hear? Jesus promised to send the Spirit to testify about *Jesus*. Should we be surprised that His activity is summarized by the word *teach* and the chief subject of this teaching is summarized by the word *Jesus*? The Spirit teaches *Jesus*!

Another thread reveals how all-encompassing the work of the Spirit is. It includes *all* things, *all* sayings of Jesus, and *all* truth. The Spirit of God is commissioned to teach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about Jesus. We should not expect extra-Biblical accounts about Jesus to have any value whether it comes from the History Channel, a so-called “Bible

scholar” with a PhD degree, or the Koran, or the Jesus Seminar, or the Gospel of Thomas, or “*any other gospel . . . than what [we] have received*” (Galatians 1:9). The Holy Spirit teaches *all* the truth about Jesus!

The hymn writer has surely captured well what this section tells us about the Holy Spirit and His work, and it forms the petition of our hearts.

Holy Ghost, with light divine  
Shine upon this heart of mine;  
Chase the shades of night away,  
Turn the darkness into day.

Let me see my Savior’s face,  
Let me all His beauties trace;  
Show those glorious truths to me  
Which are only known to Thee. Amen.<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> *The Lutheran Hymnal*, (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 234:1-2

## Book Reviews

**Douglas Wilson: *Persuasions: A Dream of Reason Meeting Unbelief*, Canon Press, Moscow, Idaho, 1989, paperback, 95 pages.**

*Persuasions* is a short book which develops the character of Evangelist from John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Written in a modern setting, but in a style reminiscent of *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Persuasions* cleverly presents examples of gospel-centered apologetics.

Douglas Wilson is pastor of Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho (part of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches). He is the founder and a faculty member at New Saint Andrews College. He is the author of many books, and the founder/editor of *Credenda/Agenda* magazine.

*Persuasions* contains a brief introduction and thirteen short chapters in which Evangelist meets a variety of people—all of whom are on the road to “the Abyss.”

Each chapter introduces the reader to one or more new characters whom Evangelist meets while on the road. Each chapter highlights a different worldview, prevalent in our world today: Immorality, Antinomianism, Feminism, Agnosticism, Empty Scholarship, Atheism, Election, Marriage, Hypocrisy in the Church, Salvation and Sanctification, Pantheism, Evolution, and Roman Catholicism. Evangelist graciously interacts with each skeptic. He clearly points out the errors of their thinking and seeks to point them to Christ.

One of the greatest assets of the book is that it gives an example of a loving, thoughtful, and biblical approach for discussing “hot topics” with a friend, neighbor, co-worker, or someone on the street. It is written in a simple style that is very easy to read and to follow. There are a few places in which Wilson's reformed theology is evident in the words he chooses, but for the most part, the book serves as a careful and thoughtful defense of the Christian faith. This book could easily be used as a springboard for discussion in catechism classes and high school or college religion classes. **(Nathanael N. Mayhew)**

**Craig Farmer, Editor: *John 1-12 (Reformation Commentary on Scripture – New Testament IV)*, Inter-Varsity Press Academic, 2014, hard cover, 539 pages, 60 preliminary pages.**

This issue of Inter-Varsity's “Reformation Commentary on Scripture” offers the exegetical work of Reformation era authors on the first twelve chapters of the gospel account of John. The Lutheran authors quoted most in this volume are Johannes Brenz (1499-1570), Erasmus Sarcerius (1501-1559), Caspar



Cruciger (1504-1548), and Aegidius Hunnius (1550-1603), although Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Philip Melancthon (1497-1560) also appear.

In his introduction, the editor, Craig Farmer, points out: “Few Reformation authors explicitly challenged or contradicted Chalcedonian Christology, that Jesus Christ our Lord is rightly confessed to be fully human and fully divine—without confusing, mixing or separating his natures, and without dividing his person” (p. xlvi). But there were differences on Christology between Lutheran and Reformed exegetes. Two of the ancient heresies condemned by the early church were Nestorianism and Eutychianism. Nestorianism divided the two natures of Christ from one another, whereas Eutychianism emphasized the unity of the person in such a way as to downplay the differences between the two natures. Farmer says: “To Lutherans, the Reformed often sounded quite Nestorian; they spoke of Christ’s non-bodily presence in the Lord’s Supper, and asserted that his divinity—because it is infinite—is ‘outside’ the bounds of his humanity. To the Reformed, Lutherans often seemed suspiciously Eutychian” (p. xlvi).” (p. xlvi).”

This Christological controversy became most heated in the discussion of the Lord’s Supper. Nevertheless, most of the early Lutheran and Reformed commentators, including Luther and Brenz, agreed that in John 6 Jesus was not referring to the Lord’s Supper when He spoke of the bread of life, but He was speaking of spiritual eating, that is, faith in Christ. Martin Luther is quoted, “It is a settled point that here in this chapter the Lord is speaking about spiritual food, for he himself explains it as the hunger and thirst of the soul. . . . It is a spiritual thirst and hunger, for which we need a spiritual meal and drink. . . . Eat this spiritual meal, believe in Christ, that is the most important thing” (p. 221). Brenz agreed, writing: “How is this bread of life eaten? By believing” (p. 221). Luther and Brenz derived their teaching about the Lord’s Supper not from John 6, but from the words of institution in the gospel accounts as well as from the apostle Paul’s discussion of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11.

At the Marburg Colloquy in 1529, Luther and Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) disagreed vehemently on their understanding of John 6:63, “*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.*” Zwingli tried to prove from these words that there is no real presence of Christ’s body in the Lord’s Supper. Farmer gives us Luther’s comment on this passage, “That is a very fine statement, one that has been tortured now for six or seven years and has suffered a hard fall, but I hope this is over. For they cited it against Communion and twisted it, wanting it to show that Christ’s living, true body is not in the Communion but rather bread and wine. Also they argue that the body and blood of Christ

serves no end in Communion. It is just flesh. . . .Therefore, we must be prepared against these silly, nonsensical spirits. Christ does not say, “My flesh is of no use,” for he said above, ‘My flesh is true food’ and commends his flesh as giving life to the world. . . . The text forces us to concede that he is not speaking about his flesh. . . . This saying cannot be understood to be about the flesh of Christ” (pp. 249-250).

There is no doubt that Philip Melanchthon in his later years made statements that tended toward synergism. For example, he said that one of the causes of conversion is man’s assenting will. But in his remarks on Jesus’ words in John 6:37, Melanchthon clearly wrote, “He could not have said anything more suitable against the notion of free choice than the fact that only those people whom the Father gives to him, or whom the Father draws, as he later says, or whom the Father teaches, may come to Christ. . . . And thus you see that absolutely nothing should be attributed to free choice or to human strength” (p. 223).

Caspar Cruciger was one of Melanchthon’s supporters who was also accused of synergism. Certainly this quotation seems to justify that charge: “Human wisdom refuses to give its assent to the gospel, and it resists the Holy Spirit. But when we listen to the gospel and give our assent, then the Holy Spirit is effectual and illumines the darkness of human minds” (p. 252).

If even the remarks of Lutherans must be read with discerning ears, how much more the views of the Anabaptists, Roman Catholics, and Reformed quoted in this volume! But all in all, it is good to have in our hands a book that demonstrates the powerful force of the Reformation and to realize that God did not use Martin Luther alone, but especially John Brenz also, as a tool in the recovery of gospel-preaching. God gave these reformers a steadfast faith in Christ and His Word in the face of entrenched opposition. Luther was not the only one to be excommunicated by the official church. Brenz reminds us: “If wicked persons offend the Lord’s church by the foulness of their deeds, they must be put out, as we read in Matthew 18 and 2 Corinthians 6.” But “if someone is driven out of the synagogue or out of the church by excommunication because of the Lord’s Word or because of confessing Christ, then it is a blessing, not a curse” (p. 354).

We will let Martin Luther have the last word. This is Luther’s comment on John 8:51: “*Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.*’ We must all face death and die. But Christians do not taste or see death, that is, they do not feel it, they are not terrified of it. . . . Here we see what a glorious thing it is to be a Christian, who even now is already and

forever released from death and can never die. For a Christian's death or dying appears outwardly like the dying of the godless, but inwardly there is a difference as great as between heaven and earth. For the Christian sleeps in death and thereby enters into life, but the godless departs from life and feels death forever. Thus we see how some tremble, doubt and despair, raging as they face the perils of death. Therefore death is also called sleep in the Scriptures. For just as one who falls asleep does not know it happens and greets the morning when he or she awakes, so shall we suddenly arise on the last day and never know how we entered and passed through death" (p. 329).

**Christopher Brown, editor: *Sixteenth-Century Biographies of Martin Luther (Luther's Works – Companion Volume)*, Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, Missouri, 2018, hard cover, 631 pages, 95 preliminary pages.**

When the editors of the first fifty-five volumes of the American Edition of Luther's Works slipped in a companion volume written by Jaroslav Pelikan on Luther's exegetical writings, some of the subscribers were upset. They felt they were subscribing to the works of Martin Luther, not anyone else, no matter how brilliant. Now another companion volume has been published. This time I hope there will not be too much dismay on the part of subscribers, because this companion volume provides the very first summaries and biographies of Luther's life, written in the lifetime of many of those who knew Luther face-to-face. Of particular note are the seventeen sermons on Luther's life written by Johann Mathesius (1504-1565) in the years from 1562 to 1564.

The first section concentrates on Luther's death and funeral. The section includes the report of Justus Jonas and Michael Coelius—who were eyewitnesses of Luther's final days and hours, Johann Bugenhagen's funeral sermon, and Philip Melanchthon's funeral oration. A few months after Luther's death, Philip Melanchthon wrote a preface to a volume of Luther's Latin writings. In this preface we learn much about Luther's early life and career, showing Luther's gradual development into a Bible student and reformer. Melanchthon wrote of Luther, "He wanted us to hear the very voice of God, and through it he wanted true faith and prayer to be kindled in many, so that God might be truly worshiped and many be made heirs of eternal life" (p. 79). We also can join in Melanchthon's prayer, "Let us give thanks to God, the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose will it was that the filth and poisons should again be removed from the wellsprings of the Gospel by the ministry of Martin Luther, and who has restored the pure doctrine to the Church" (p. 77). Last of all in this section we have a long poem about Martin Luther's life written by his good friend, the musician Johann Walther.

Most of this volume (over 500 pages) is devoted to the text of Mathesius' lengthy sermons, delivered and written for the benefit of his congregation of miners in Joachimsthal in Bohemia. Each sermon covers a section of Luther's life, beginning with Luther's birth in 1483 and concluding with his death in 1546. For example, the third sermon gives us the account of Luther's appearance in 1521 before the Diet of Worms, when Luther refused to recant his writings. Mathesius reports, "Dr. Luther replied and confessed: that unless he were to be persuaded and convinced by the testimony of Holy Scripture or by plain and clear arguments (for he would give credence neither to the pope nor to the councils, since it is manifest and evident that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), he could not and would not recant anything, for it was neither safe nor advisable to do anything against conscience. 'Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen'" (p. 174). These last words have been contested. The editor's prefaces and footnotes discuss in detail all such questions and make corrections where Mathesius was likely mistaken.

Mathesius was not present for many of the things about which he writes concerning Luther's early life and work. In 1526, he was converted to the evangelical teaching by reading Luther's 1520 *Treatise on Good Works*. In 1529, Mathesius became a student at the University of Wittenberg and became well-acquainted with Luther and his close friends Melancthon, Bugenhagen, and Jonas, as well as with some of the younger scholars. After a few years at Wittenberg, Mathesius held various teaching positions. He returned to Wittenberg in 1540 and began eating his meals with the Luther family, together with a number of others who carefully took notes on whatever Luther said at the table. In 1542 Mathesius left Wittenberg to serve as pastor in Joachimsthal, which at that time was the second largest city in Bohemia, second only to Prague.

Since Mathesius was in close contact with Luther's circle for a long time, he certainly had access to the information needed to write his sermons on Luther's life. There is no doubt he believed that Martin Luther was God's gift to Christians everywhere. In his fifteenth sermon Mathesius says, "We . . . give sincere thanks to God for having raised up this excellent teacher and having through him rescued us from the Antichrist's doctrine, burnished the pure and blessed doctrine and restored it to our churches. At the same time, we want to ask the eternal Father in the name of Jesus Christ that He would not let us forget this Christian man and his doctrine, and that He would preserve us and our posterity steadfast in it, and that He would graciously protect us against all heresy and falsification of the Gospel" (p. 538).

Surely this must be the prayer of confessional Lutherans at every place and time. **(David T. Lau)**