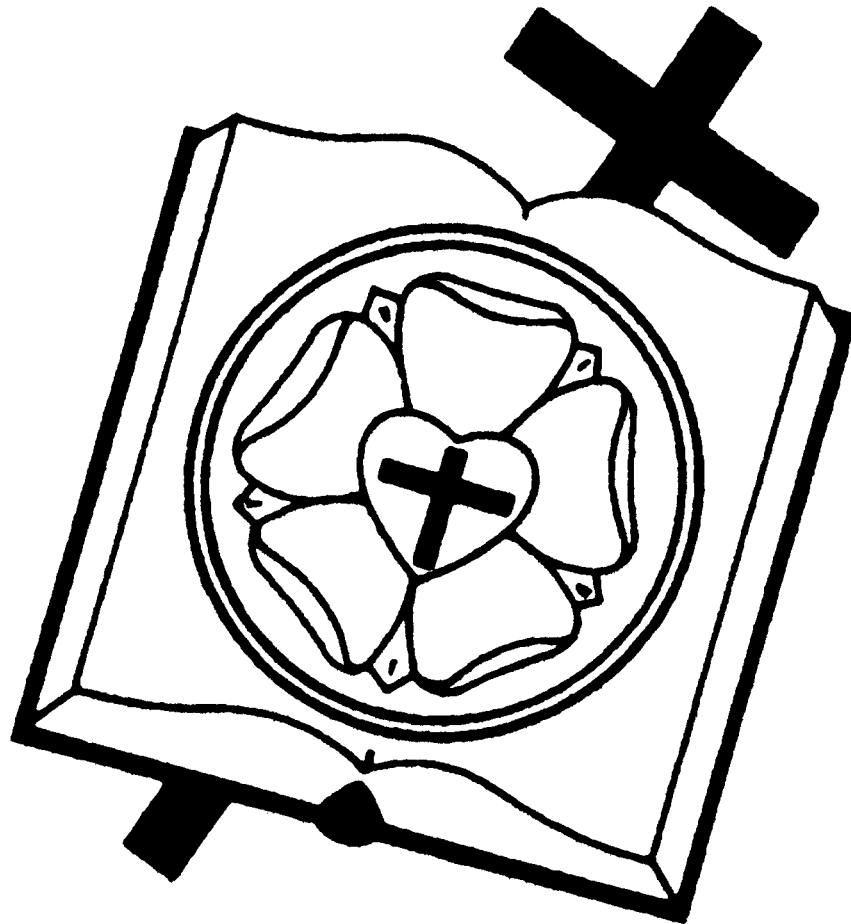
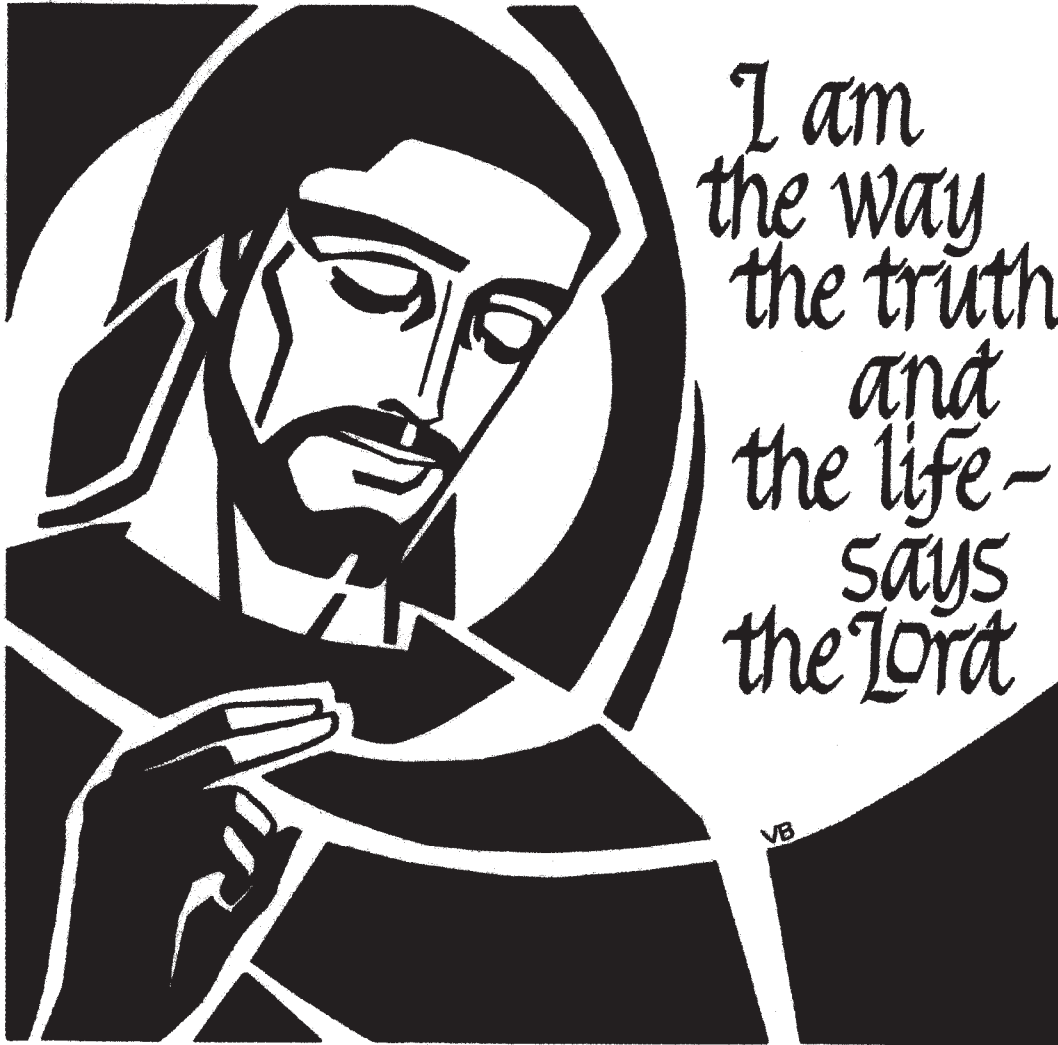


LIFE WITH GOD
A Survey Of Biblical Doctrine
As Confessed In
The Evangelical Lutheran Church



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Our Savior Lutheran Church
Houston, Texas
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UNIT I

Introduction

Ground Rules of the Class

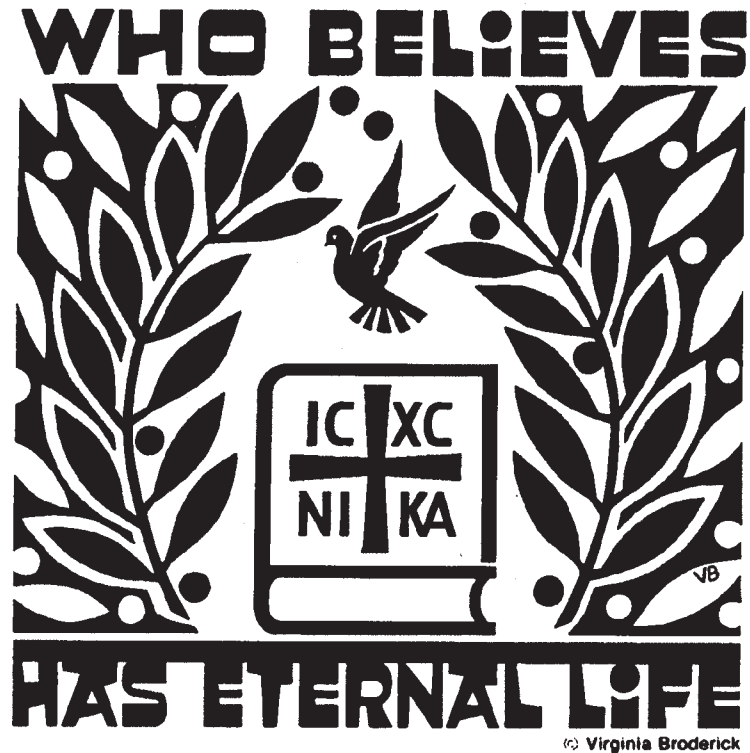
1. The Bible is our basic textbook; it is our only reliable guide. You don't have to accept anyone's opinion or tradition without Biblical support. But if it can be shown that a doctrine has a firm base in Scripture, then it must be accepted by all.

2. Class discussion and questions are encouraged. The benefit you derive from the class will be directly proportionate to your level of participation. Regular involvement in Sunday morning worship and Bible study are also strongly encouraged.

3. The printed notes will include additional material not covered during the class sessions which you are encouraged to study on your own. Time for discussion of your questions will be included at the beginning of each class session.

4. The basic doctrines of the Christian faith will be presented in a brief summary fashion. Our study is in no way comprehensive or complete. It is only the beginning of a lifelong process.

5. This class involves more than the simple transfer of information. It is intended to strengthen and renew your Life With God.



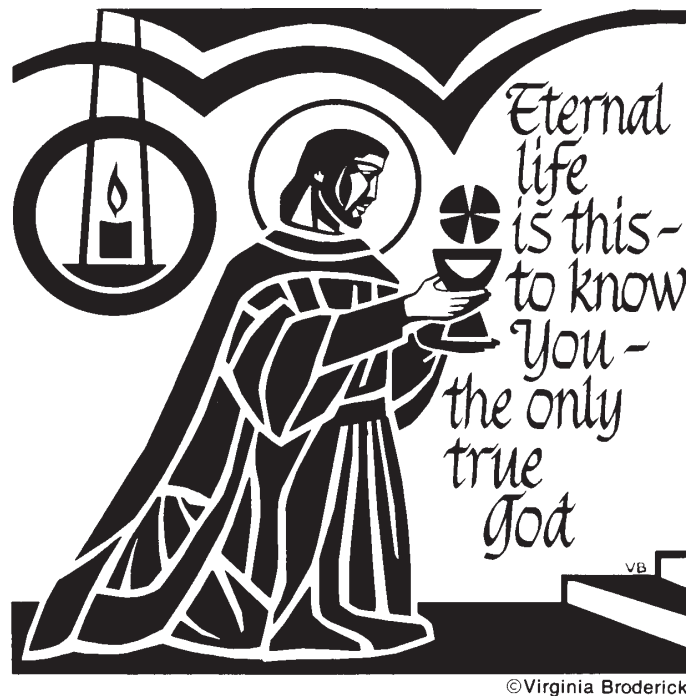
THE REAL MEANING OF LIFE

To be truly alive, that is, to experience the overflowing richness of the abundant, eternal life for which human beings were created, one must be in relationship with God by faith in Jesus Christ.

John 10:10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full.”

John 17:2,3 “For you have granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

John 11:25,26 “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’”



WHERE CAN ANSWERS BE FOUND TO THE BASIC QUESTIONS OF LIFE?

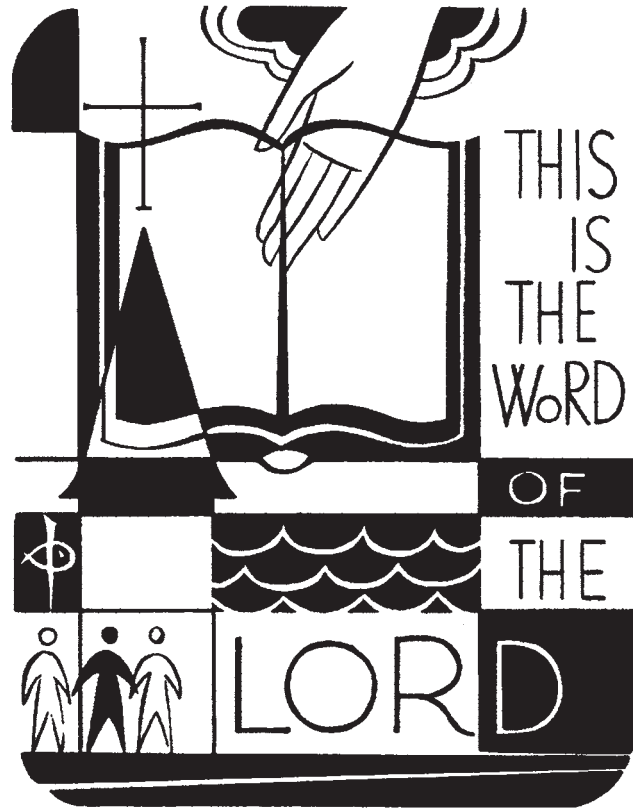
Since man's fall into sin, human beings have sought the answers to basic questions about the meaning of life within themselves. Historically this quest has followed one of three paths: (Note the parallel between these three paths and the components in the "*Image of God*" in which man was originally created. cf. p. 41)

- 1. Philosophy - seeking answers in the intellect and rationality of man.**
- 2. Mysticism - seeking answers in the feelings and emotions of man.**
- 3. Moralism - seeking answers in the self-control and discipline of man's moral will.**

The Bible teaches that all of man's attempts to find meaning for his life within himself are doomed to failure. This is inevitable because man is by nature:

- 1. Spiritually Blind - II Corinthians 4:1-4; I Corinthians 2:14.**
- 2. Spiritually Dead - Ephesians 2:1-5.**
- 3. An Enemy of God - Romans 5:6-10.**

If answers are to be provided they must come from outside of man, from God Himself. Apart from God there are no real answers to the basic questions of life. That is why God has spoken to man in His Word.



THE HOLY SCRIPTURES - THE WORD OF GOD

Each and every word of the Bible is the Word of God. (Plenary Verbal Inspiration) -

II Timothy 3:14-16 - "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." cf. Genesis 2:7; Isaiah 6:1-8; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Ezekial 2:1-3:15.

II Peter 1:19-21 - "And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand, that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophets own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

The Characteristics of the Word of God

Because the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God it possesses certain divine characteristics. These characteristics include:

1. Inerrancy - The Bible contains no errors. cf. Numbers 23:19; John 10:35; 17:17; Romans 3:4; Titus 1:2.

“Since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, it goes without saying that they contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters...We reject the doctrine which under the name of science has gained wide popularity in the church of our day that the Holy Scripture is not in all its parts the Word of God, but in part the Word of God and in part the word of man and hence does, at least, might, contain error. We reject this erroneous doctrine as horrible and blasphemous, since it flatly contradicts Christ and his holy apostles, sets up men as judges over the Word of God, and thus overthrows the foundation of the Christian Church and its faith.” (Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod, CPH, St. Louis:1932)





"The Word of God as the Spring of Life"
by Rudolf Schüfer

2. Authority - The authority of the Bible is the authority of God Himself who stands behind every statement, doctrine, promise, and command of Scripture. This authority cannot be superseded by any other. It is supreme. God said it: that settles it. *"My conscience is captive to the Word of God."* (M. Luther, 1529) Whoever ignores, disregards, rejects, alters, or criticizes Holy Scripture, insults the majesty of God and rebels against His divine authority. cf. texts cited above, Ephesians 2:20.

"We believe, teach, and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged...Other writings of ancient and modern teachers, whatever their names, should not be put on a par with Holy Scripture. Every single one of them should be subordinated to the Scriptures. The distinction between the

Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is maintained, and Holy Scripture remains the only judge, rule, and norm according to which as the only touchstone all doctrines should and must be understood and judged as good or evil, right or wrong.”
(Formula of Concord, 1577)

3. Clarity - The Bible clearly reveals the will of God, setting forth all we need know to be saved. The Bible does not require the interpretation of others. cf. Deuteronomy 30:11-14; Psalm 119:105; II Peter 1:19; 3:15-16.

4. Sufficiency - Everything a believer must know to be saved and everything he must do to live a life pleasing to God is contained in Scripture. No additional revelation is necessary or to be expected. What is not clearly revealed in Scripture is not necessary for salvation. The Canon of Scripture is closed. cf. Deuteronomy 4:2; Matthew 15:9; John 20:31; 21:25; I Corinthians 13:8-12; II Timothy 3:16-17; 4:3,4; Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19.



“Thy Word Is a Lamp to My Feet” by Rudolf Schäfer

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Why are there so many different interpretations of the Bible? As a result of sin, natural man resists and suppresses the truth of God. In his defiance he refuses to submit to the authority of God's Word.



"Sola Scriptura" by Rudolf Schäfer

Romans 1:18-19 "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them." (This text continues - vs.20-32 - to provide Scripture's most powerful description of the destructive effects of sin on the quality of human life.)

I Corinthians 2:14 "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them for they are spiritually discerned."

II Corinthians 10:5 "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

II Peter 2:19-21 "They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity-for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred commandment that was passed on to them." (cf. also II Peter 3:15-16)

WHAT IS THE KEY TO THE CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE?

Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, is the heart and center of the Scripture and therefore the key to its true meaning.

John 5:39-40 “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me to have life.”

Luke 24:27 “Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.” (cf. also vs. 13-26)

John 20:31 “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.”

Ephesians 2:20 “You are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone.”

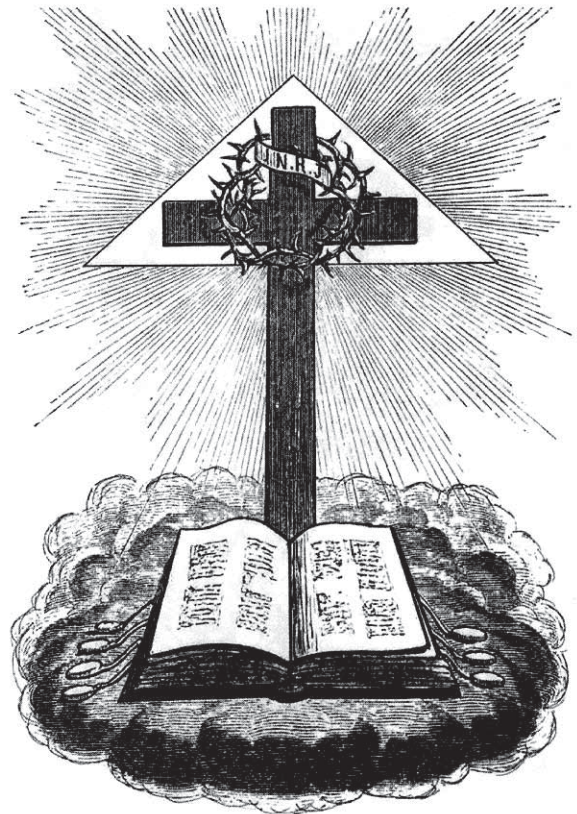
Hebrews 1:1-2 “In the past God spoke to our forefather through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son.”



“All Bear Witness to Him” by Rudolf Schäfer

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION (HERMENEUTICS)

1. The Bible must be interpreted according to its own claims that it is the inspired Word of God.
2. The content of the sixty-six books of the Biblical canon is unified and consistent. The Bible cannot contradict itself. The existence of apparent contradictions in the Biblical text is the result of the inadequacy of our reason or the limitations of our knowledge.
3. Since God has chosen to reveal His Word in human language its meaning must be determined in accordance with the rules of language, grammar, and logic. Our reason, however, must always function as a servant of the inspired text; never presuming to be its master.
4. The study of Scripture is never an end in itself, a mere process of intellectual gratification. The purpose of Bible study must always be the glorification of God and the salvation of sinful men.
5. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is essential for a proper understanding of the Biblical text.
6. We are bound to the bare words (*nuda verba*) of Scripture in their normal, literal, sense unless the Scriptural text itself indicates that a figurative sense is intended.
7. The interpretation of every word and passage of Holy Scripture must be in agreement with its context.



8. No interpretation is correct unless it is grammatically correct, that is, according to the grammar and syntax of the language in which it was originally written.
9. Every interpretation of Scripture must be historically correct, that is, the Bible must be understood in the historical circumstances of the world in which it was written.
10. There is only one intended meaning for any given Biblical text.
11. All Biblical interpretation must have Christ as its center, teach Christ, and glorify Him as Savior and Lord.
12. Scripture interprets Scripture. The Scripture is its own light.

Scripture Interprets Scripture!

*It's the only way
to ever get beyond an endless variety of conflicting opinions!*

The Principle in Practice

John 1:1-14 ----- Genesis 1:1-27

Genesis 3:1-7 ----- Revelation 12:7-9

“It is indeed true that some passages of Scripture are dark; however, they contain nothing but precisely that which is found in other places in clear open passages...Be sure and do not doubt that nothing brighter exists than the sun, that is, the Scripture. But if a cloud has drifted before it, there, after all, is nothing else behind it than the same bright sun. Therefore, if you come upon a dark passage in Scripture, do not doubt that it surely contains the same truth that is clearly expressed at other places; and whoever cannot understand the dark passages should stay with the clear ones.” (M. Luther, 1521, From What Luther Says, Vol. I, Ewald Plass, Editor & Translator. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1959)

The Canon of the Bible

The term “*canon*” refers to those books in the Jewish and Christian Bible considered to be divinely inspired Scripture. The word is derived from a Greek and Hebrew term which means “*rule*”, “*measuring rod*”, or “*standard*”. Thus the Biblical Canon is the collection of books which met the standard of divine inspiration and are recognized as the Word of God.



St. Jerome - Translator of the Bible into Latin

The Hebrew Old Testament, called the “*Tanak*” (*Torah-Naviim-Kethubim*), was divided by the Jews into three sections, the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. (cf. Luke 24:44) These three sections were subdivided into 24 books which included all 39 books of the modern Old Testament. The standard of canonicity for the books of the Old Testament was prophetic authorship. That is to say, for a book to be included it must indisputably have been written by a forth-teller who spoke the Word of God, a prophet. The canon of the Old Testament was formalized by a rabbinical council in the Palestinian village of Jamnia in 90 AD.

The Old Testament Apocrypha (Greek - “*hidden things*”) is a collection of 15 books written during the four centuries between the end of the Old Testament and the coming of Christ. These books were never accepted as Scripture within Judaism. St. Jerome, translator of the official Latin Bible, the Vulgate, included the Apocrypha because of the

widespread popularity of these books but noted that they could be read for edification but “*not for confirming the authority of church dogmas*”. Luther also included them in his

German Bible version with the note: “*Apocrypha - These books are not held equal to the Sacred Scriptures and yet are good and useful for reading.*” The Roman Catholic Church at its Council of Trent in 1546 broke with both Jewish and early Christian precedent and declared the Apocrypha to be an official part of the canon of Scripture. The Catholic Church remains the only denomination which considers the Apocrypha to be a part of the Bible.

The Canon of the New Testament includes 27 books. The standard of canonicity for the books of the New Testament was apostolic authorship. For a book to be included in the New Testament Canon it must be recognized throughout the church as having been written by one of the apostles, the 14 men directly chosen by Christ to represent him as leaders of the church. By the end of the second century (200 AD) there was general agreement within Christendom as to which books should be included. There remained on the margin a number of books whose canonicity, while affirmed by the majority, was still in dispute. This group included Hebrews, James, II and III John, Jude, and Revelation. By the end of the fourth century, general agreement had also been reached in regard to these disputed books. In 367 AD, St. Athanasius published the final list of 27 books universally recognized throughout the Christian Church.



“St. Athanasius of Alexandria”

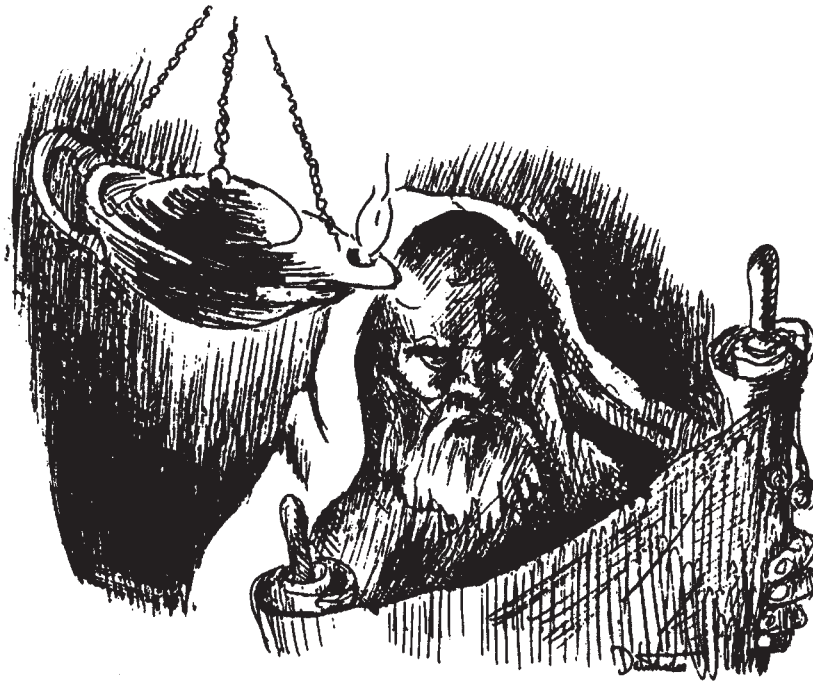
In the final analysis the books of the Bible are self-authenticating. They convey the power and authority of God who inspired them. The process of canonization is merely the record of God’s people’s formal recognition of that authority. Thus the church did not create the Bible; the Bible creates the church.

The Reliability of the Biblical Text

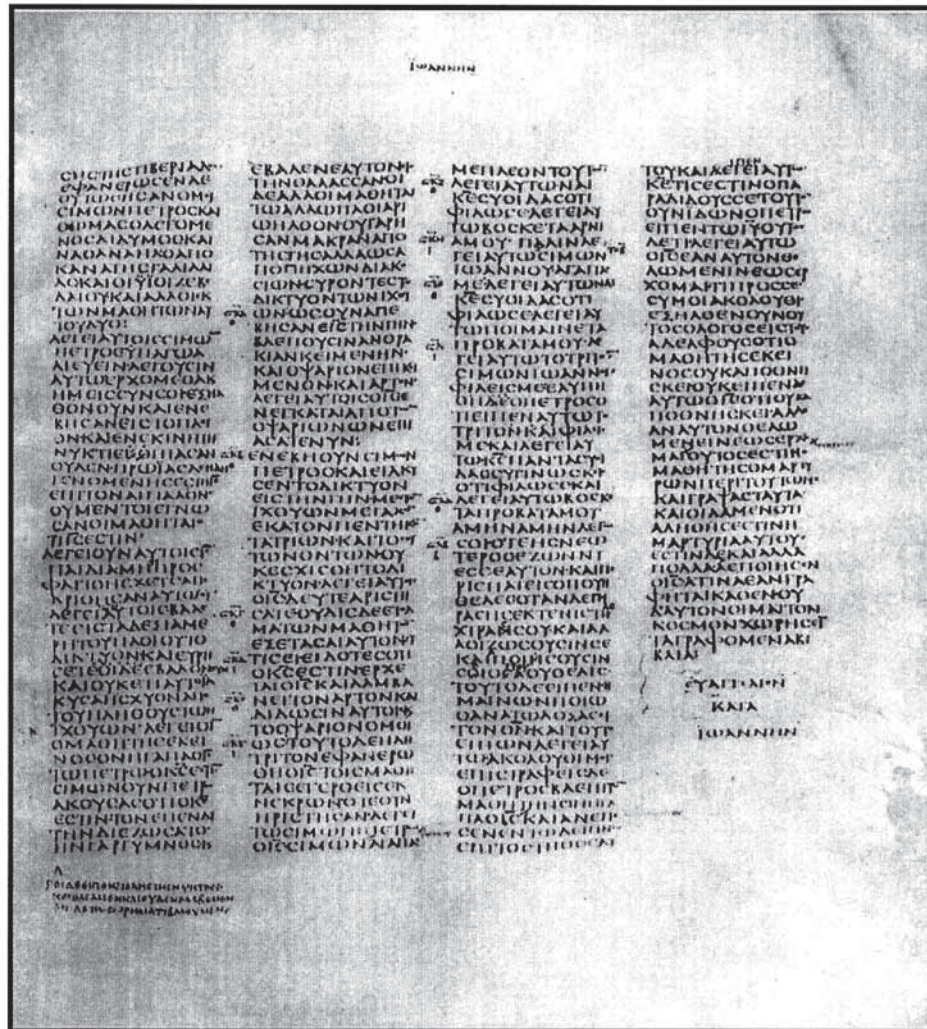
From Ancient Manuscripts to Modern Translations

The text of the Bible was originally written in Hebrew (OT) and Greek (NT). The original copies (“*autographs*”) of the 66 books of the Bible are no longer in existence. The Hebrew and Greek texts of Scripture today are the result of meticulous comparison of thousands of manuscripts (hand written copies) and manuscript fragments (“*Textual Criticism*”).

The oldest Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament in existence today are the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered by accident at Wadi Qumram in 1947. The collection of 400 scrolls found in the Dead Sea Caves included texts from every book in the Old Testament except the Book of Esther. The scrolls, dating from before the time of Christ, were more than 1,000 years older than any previously discovered OT manuscripts. This amazing discovery demonstrated the accuracy of the 60 basic copies of the traditional “*Masoretic*” text (AD 500-900) which had been the basis for the Hebrew text used in modern times.



The Greek text of the New Testament is preserved in no less than 5,366 manuscript sources. These include papyri (88), uncials (247)-manuscripts written on animal skins



A Page from "Codex Sinaiticus"

in capital letters-, minuscules (2,795) - manuscripts written on animal skins in flowing cursive letters-, and lectionaries (2,795) - manuscripts arranged for reading according to the sequence of the liturgical calendar. 59 of these manuscripts are copies of the entire New Testament. The “*Codex Sinaiticus*”, found in a waste basket at the Monastery of St. Catherine in 1844 by Constantin von Tischendorf dates from the early 4th century. Its counterpart at the Vatican Library in Rome, the “*Codex Vaticanus*,” includes the whole Greek Bible from the same time period.

The careful study of this host of manuscript material indicates that the Hebrew and Greek texts on which our modern translations are based are accurate and reliable. There is not one instance in which the doctrinal differences between Christian denominations result

from a textual variant. The process of the preservation and transmission of the Biblical text is historical fulfillment of our Lord's promise: ***“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.”*** (Matthew 24:35).

“What the church lacks in our day is not a reliable text of the Bible, but faith in the sufficiently reliable text.” (F. Pieper, 1936)



UNIT II

God and Creation



Four Basic Views on God

Monotheism ----- *One God*
Polytheism ----- *Many Gods*
Pantheism ----- *Everything Is God*
Atheism ----- *No God*

Scripture ridicules the conclusion that there is no God as utter foolishness. To deny the existence of God is to deny the plain evidence of nature itself and human conscience. Atheism, so popular among the pseudo-intellectuals of the modern world, is simply not a rational alternative from the Biblical perspective.



"The Holy Trinity" by Albrecht Dürer

Psalm 14:1 "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

Psalm 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

Romans 1:20 "Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."

Romans 2:14,15 "When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them."

Hebrews 3:4 "Every house is built by someone, but God is the Builder of everything."



"The Holy Trinity" by Rudolf Schäfer

The Bible teaches that the true God is one. The faith of Scripture is strictly monotheistic.

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." cf. Isaiah 40:10-31; Jeremiah 10:1-16.

Acts 14:15 "We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them."

I Corinthians 8:4 "We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one."

At the same time the Bible teaches that within the one God there are three separate and

distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Matthew 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

John 15:26 “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.”

II Corinthians 13:14 “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

The Biblical teaching of a God who is one in three and three in one is called the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery, incomprehensible to human reason, which must simply be accepted by faith on the basis of the Biblical testimony.



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“Whoever wishes to be saved must, above all else, hold the true Christian faith. Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish for eternity. This is the true Christian faith that we worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God, without confusing the persons or dividing the divine substance...three persons are to be worshiped in one Godhead and one God is to be worshiped in three persons. Whoever wishes to be saved must think thus about the Trinity.” - Athanasian Creed, 5th Century AD

The Attributes of God

1. God is a spirit, a personal being without physical substance. John 4:24
2. God is transcendent. He is not a part of created reality, a mere projection or amplification of natural forces. He exists apart from and over creation. Exodus 3:13-14



“The Almighty Enthroned Amid the Cherubim” - 12 Century Byzantine Mosaic

3. God is eternal, without beginning and without end, not bound by time. Psalm 90:1-2; I Timothy 1:17
4. God is unchangeable. Psalm 102:27; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17
5. God is almighty. There are no limitations upon His power. Genesis 17:1; Matthew 19:26
6. God is all-knowing. There are no limitations upon His knowledge. Psalm 139:1-4; John 21:17
7. God is present everywhere. Jeremiah 23:24; Acts 17:27
8. God is holy. He is without sin. Leviticus 19:8; Isaiah 6:3
9. God is just. He is fair and impartial. Deuteronomy 32:4
10. God is merciful and gracious. Jeremiah 3:12; Titus 3:5; Exodus 34:6-7
11. God is love. John 3:16; I John 4:8

THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION

The Bible teaches that God created the universe and everything that exists out of nothing in six days by His almighty Word. cf. Genesis 1:1-2:3



*“The Divine Christ as the Creator of the Universe”
13th Century Bible Illumination*

Exodus 20:11 *“In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them.”*

Psalms 33:6, 9 *“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made...He spoke, and it came to be; he commanded and it stood firm.”*

Psalms 124:8 *“Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.”*

John 1:1-3 *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.”*

Colossians 1:16 *“By Him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.”*

Hebrews 11:3 *“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”*

An Affirmation of the Biblical Doctrine of Creation

“We teach that God has created heaven and earth, and that in the manner and in the space of time recorded in the Holy Scriptures, especially Genesis 1 and 2, namely by his almighty creative word, and in six days. We reject every doctrine which denies or limits the work of creation as taught in Scripture. In our days it is denied or limited by those who assert, ostensibly in deference to science, that the world came into existence by a process of evolution; that is, that it has, in immense periods of time, developed more or less out of itself. Since no man was present when it pleased God to create the world, we must look for a reliable account of creation to God’s own record, found in God’s own book, the Bible. We accept God’s own record with full confidence and confess with Luther’s Catechism: ‘I believe that God has made me and all creatures.’” (Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod, CPH, St. Louis: 1932)



An Analysis of Genesis Chapter One

“The first chapter of Genesis is the most remarkable chapter in the whole Bible and is unique in all the literature of the world. Here we have in simple and beautiful language the only answer to the question of how the world came into being...Here is dignity, simplicity, and beauty. In crisp, telegraphic style the drama of creation is unfolded day by day...There is no vagueness or uncertainty here, no bombast or meaningless verbiage. There is no grotesque description of the creating gods as found in the pagan mythologies. The Eternal God was, He speaks, and things are. Every word is a flash of creating power. Here God reveals His majesty, power, and wisdom in actions that are beyond human comprehension; yet they are described in language so simple that a child can understand it...But this chapter is not only unique in its brevity and literary beauty: its content has stood the test of time. It has withstood the vicious attacks of the enemies of the Bible throughout all the ages-like the granite mountain peak calmly

defying the raging storms and ravages of weather. But the pretentious Lilliputian critics of the past, who arrogantly attempted to undermine this Rock of Ages with their toy picks and shovels, have been forgotten and their ever changing theories are remembered only by the professionals as antiquarian theological curiosities. The same will be true in the future by those who assume the role of critics now.” (Alfred Rehwinkel, The Wonder of Creation, Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis: 1974)



“The Creation of the World” by Lucas Cranach - 1534

Creation vs. Evolution

What Difference Does It Make?

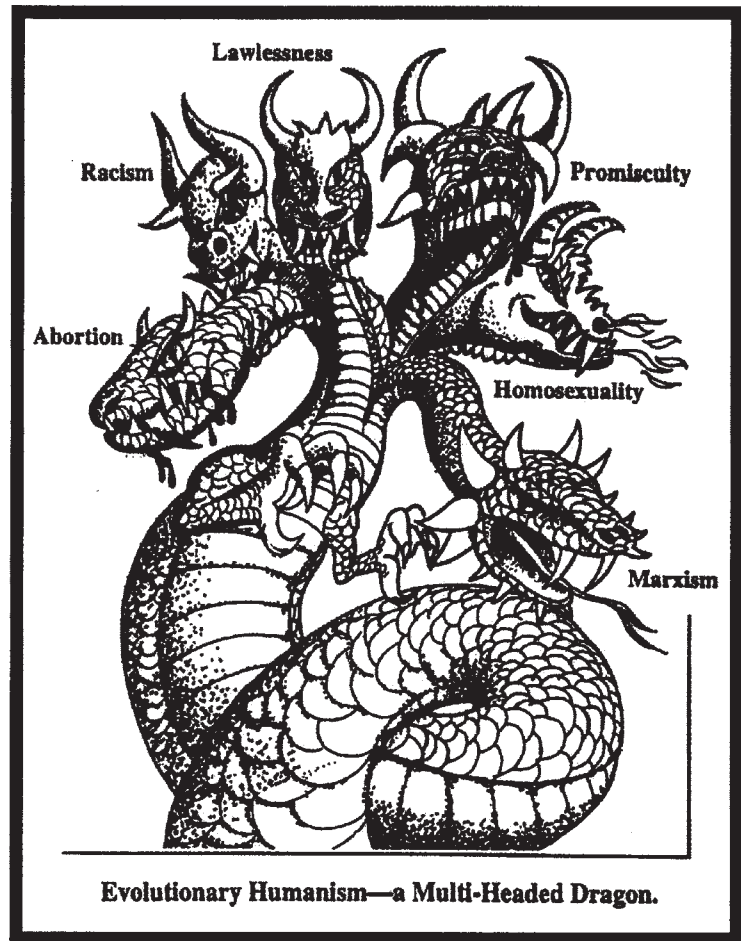
A denial of the Biblical doctrine of God as the Creator of the universe has far-reaching repercussions:

1. Destroys the basis for God's relationship with man
2. Denies man's responsibility to God
3. Robs humanity of its dignity and human life of its sanctity
4. Eliminates the possibility of objective morality
5. Jeopardizes the survival of the weak and the helpless in a world where "might makes right"
6. Subjects all human experience to random chance and accident

Evolution - A Christian Assessment

“The denial of God - rejecting the reality of supernatural creation and the Creator’s sovereign rule of the world - has always been the root cause of every human problem. This evolutionary, humanistic, pantheistic - even atheistic - world view has taken many different forms over the ages, varying with time and culture, but it has always been there in one guise or another, to turn the minds and hearts of people away from their Maker. There has indeed been an agelong war against God. It has been going on from the beginning of time and will increase in intensity in these last days...I am not speaking here only of Darwinism, nor even of biological

evolution in general, but of evolution as a total philosophy that purports to explain the origin and development of all things by natural properties and processes in a closed universe, one with no involvement by any external, supernatural Creator.” (Henry Morris, The Long War Against God, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids: 1990)



Christianity - An Evolutionist’s Assessment

“Christianity has fought, still fights, and will fight science to the desperate end over evolution, because evolution destroys utterly and finally the very reason Jesus’ earthly life was supposedly made necessary. Destroy Adam and Eve and the original sin, and in the rubble you will find the sorry remains of the son of god. Take away the meaning of his death. If Jesus was not the redeemer who died for our sins, and this is what evolution means, then Christianity is nothing.” (G. Richard Bozarth, “The Meaning of Evolution,” American Atheist, February, 1978)



“The Fifth Day of Creation” - 19th Century Bible Engraving

THE LENGTH OF THE CREATION DAY

In an attempt to reconcile the text of Genesis 1 with some form of “*theistic evolution*” it has been suggested that the six “*days*” (Hebrew - “*Yom*”) of creation are not literal, 24 hour, days but instead represent long geological, epochal periods of time which may have included millions of years. (cf. Psalm 90:4; II Peter 3:8)

The issue is not: “How could God have created the world?”

The issue is: “What does the Bible say about how God created the world?”

Both the immediate context of Genesis 1 (“*and there was evening and there was morning*” vs. 5,8,13,19,23,31) and the general context of Scripture (the establishment of the seventh day as the Sabbath because of the pattern of creation, Genesis 2:2, Exodus 20:8-11) make it unmistakably clear that the intended sense of the term is literal, 24 hour, days. It is therefore improper and destructive of Scripture’s authority as the Word of God to impose a figurative meaning on this term in order to comply with current scientific theory.

“Therefore I have often said, that anyone who desires to study the Holy Scriptures must see to it that he remains with the plain words whenever possible and never departs from them. Only an article of faith can compel us to conclude that the words must be understood differently than they sound. We are all the more certain that no plainer words have ever been spoken on earth than the words which God has spoken. Therefore, when Moses writes that God created heaven and earth in six days, let his words stand...If, however, you cannot understand how this could have been done in six days, then give the Holy Spirit the honor of being more learned than you are.” (Martin Luther 1524, From Preface to Sermons On the First Book of Moses, St. Louis, Edition III. Concordia Publishing House, 1894)



“The Sixth Day of Creation” - 19th Century Bible Engraving



“Carried Home on Angels’ Wings” by Rudolf Schäfer

The Creation of Angels

“I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.” (Nicene Creed, 325 AD)

The word “*angel*” (Hebrew- “*malach*” Greek- “*angelos*”) means “*messenger*” or “*ambassador*”. The angels are spiritual beings created by God to serve Him by ministering to His people. cf. Hebrews 1:14; Psalm 91:10-11; Psalm 103:20-21; II Kings 19:35; II Kings 6:15-17; Daniel 6:16-23; Matthew 2:13-21; Acts 12:5-11

Scripture teaches that the angels are many and powerful. cf. Daniel 7:10; Luke 2:13; Psalm 103: 20-21; II Peter 2:10-11; Revelation 5:11 Ranks of angels are mentioned, but the differences between them are not defined: “*Cherubim*” - Genesis 3:24, Psalm 80:1; “*seraphim*” - Isaiah 6:2; “*thrones and powers*” - Colossians 1:16; and, “*archangels*” - I Thessalonians 4:16. Two of the angels, Gabriel (Daniel 8:16-26; 9:20-27; Luke 1:11-20; Luke 1:26-38) and Michael (Daniel 10:13,21; 12:1; Jude 9, Revelation 12:7) are specifically named.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

“My times are in your hands.” Psalm 31:15

All that exists is the handiwork of God with a beginning and an end as determined by the Creator Himself. God is constantly and actively present with all that he has made, keeping and sustaining, directing and governing. ***“From Him and to Him and through Him are all things.”*** (Romans 11:36) Without that ongoing divine participation and preservation the universe would disintegrate into chaos. The primary principles of order and direction, the very laws of nature itself flow from the will of Him who commands the morning and causes the dawn to know its place (Job 38:12)

“He waters the mountains from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of His work. He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate - bringing forth fruit from the earth.” Psalm 104:13-14 (cf. vs. 1-35)

“He causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matthew 5:45

“For by Him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together.” Colossians 1:16,17

“And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives all men life and breath and everything else...For in Him we live and move and have our being.” Acts 17:25,28

God’s governance of the created universe is complete down to the smallest and most intimate details of existence. The reality of divine providence is presented as a source of comfort and encouragement for the people of God.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” Matthew 10:29-30

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear...Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!...Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!” Luke 12:22,24,27-28

“Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.” I Peter 5:7



“What God Ordains Is Always Good” by Rudolf Schärer



"The Creation of Adam" by Hans Sebald Beham - 1530

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

The universe was fashioned as a home for mankind. God created man in His own image after His own likeness, giving him dominion over every living thing that moved on the earth.

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"

Genesis 1:26-28

The uniqueness of humankind consists of our creation in the *"image"* and *"likeness"* of God. As creatures fashioned in His image, Adam and Eve were without sin. They knew God as He wishes to be known and were perfectly happy to live according to His will.

THE IMAGE OF GOD

Genesis 2

Ability to Make Moral Choices
(vs. 15-17)

Ability to Reason and Communicate Rationally
(vs. 20,23)

Ability to Love
(vs. 18-24)



“Adam in Eden” by Johann Elias Riddinger



"Adam and Eve in Eden" by E. Laitan

your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

The image of God was lost when our first parents disobeyed God and fell into sin. Their will and intellect lost the ability to know and please him. Even the ability to love was twisted into an expression of selfish manipulation. cf. Genesis 3:8-19. Thus the first family history of mankind in Genesis 5:3-5 distinguishes between Adam who was created in God's own image and his son Seth who was born not in God's image but in the image of his father Adam. For the believer, the image of God is restored as we *"put on the new man"* in Christ. That restoration, however, will only be complete when we live with Him in heaven, free from sin and all of its consequences.

Colossians 3:9,10 "Do not lie to each other since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

Ephesians 4:22-24 "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off



"The Creation of Eve" by Rudolf Schärer

HUMANKIND AS MALE AND FEMALE

God created both man and woman in His image, equal to one another and interdependent upon one another.

Genesis 1:27 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Genesis 2:18-23 "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.' Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all of the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam, no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said,

‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.’”

1 Corinthians 11:11-12 “In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.”

Galatians 3:26-29 “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”



“The Creation of Eve” by Hans Sebald Beham -1530

While men and women are equal, they are not identical. God created each gender with unique capabilities and talents designed to compliment one another. cf. Genesis 2:18 The roles which Scripture assigns to men and women in relationship to one another reflect that divine purpose. Man is to be the “head” with responsibility/authority to place the welfare of his spouse/family ahead of his own, providing for and protecting them. Our Lord Himself provides the model for this self-sacrificing leadership. Woman, by her willing submission to the man as one equal to another, is to be the loving, caring “heart” of the family, using the sensitivity and creativity with which God has blessed her for the benefit of others. (cf. The description of the ideal wife - Proverbs 31:10-31).

Genesis 3:17-19 “To the woman he said, ‘I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.’ To Adam he said, ‘Because you listened to your wife and listened to the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground from which you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.’

Ephesians 5:22-33 “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church



*“God’s Wonderful Institution of Marriage”
by Rudolf Schäfer*

and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle, or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church - for we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a profound mystery - but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you must also love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

1 Peter 3:1-2,7 "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives...Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers."

The Bible teaches that the church, ***"the household of God"*** bears a special responsibility to reflect God's will for men and women to the world. Therefore Christian women are to refrain from any activity in the church which would constitute an exercise of authority over men, or which could be construed by society as a rejection of the divinely ordained role/relationship between men and women.

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 "I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teaching just as I passed them on to you. Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and that the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head - it is just as though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman but woman for man. For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head. In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long hair it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice, nor do the churches of God."

I Corinthians 14:33-38 "As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. Did the Word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. If he ignores this, let he himself be ignored."

I Timothy 2:11-15 "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing - if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety."

Thus the responsibility/authority for leadership in the church, both in the pastoral office and in the governing assemblies of the congregations should be exercised by men. This certainly does not exclude women from being involved in Christ's work but directs their service in a way that accords with the headship principle that God set forth in creation.



*"Her
children arise
and call her blessed."*

Proverbs 31:28

UNIT III

SIN, DEATH, AND THE DEVIL



"The Fall Into Sin" by Hans Weigel - 1535



"The Demons of the Seven Deadly Sins" by Hans Weigel - 1511

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

Sin is the natural condition of every human being. The Bible teaches that human sinfulness is not merely a series of errors, wrong actions, or bad habits. Sin is primarily what we are; not just what we do. The sinful thoughts, desires, words, and actions that we commit are the symptoms of the disease, not the disease itself. Our sinfulness begins at the instant we become human, before we have ever done anything.

Psalm 51:5 "Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."

Ephesians 2:1-3 “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest we were by nature objects of wrath.”

Romans 3:9-18 “We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.” “Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on their lips.” “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.” “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Romans 8:7 “The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.”

I John 3:4 “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.”



“The Fall” by J. James Tissot



ORIGINAL SIN AND ACTUAL SIN

Original sin is the total corruption of our whole human nature which we have inherited from Adam through our parents. Original sin has brought guilt and condemnation on all people, left everyone without true fear and love of God (spiritually blind, dead, and enemies of God, cf. p.11), and causes everyone to commit all kinds of specific transgressions of the law of God.

Romans 5:12,14,18 "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned...Nevertheless death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come...Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men."

Genesis 8:21 “Every inclination of man’s heart is evil from childhood.”

Galatians 5:19 “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality; impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.”

Actual sin is every act against a commandment of God in thought, desire, word, or deed. It is God’s will, expressed in his Word, summarized in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), that determines right and wrong. That standard of morality is objective and absolute. It does not and cannot change in contrast to human standards of right and wrong which are subjective and functional (Does it work? Will I get caught? Does anyone get hurt?)! The corruption of Original Sin is universal. Therefore the prevalence of Actual Sin is also universal.

Matthew 15:19 “Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.”

James 1:15 “After desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin.” (Sins of Commission)

James 4:17 “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.” (Sins of Omission)

I John 3:4 “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.”

Psalms 51:4 “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.”

Psalms 14:3 “All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

Ecclesiastes 7:20 “There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.”

In the eyes of the holy God all sins are equally deserving of damnation. No sin is insignificant or tolerable. Sin is always a matter of life and death. While the eternal consequences of all sins are the same, some sins are more damaging than others here in time. (i.e. hate - murder: lust - adultery)

Galatians 3:10 “All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.’”

James 2:10 “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.”

Matthew 5:19-20, 27 “Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven...For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law; you will certainly not enter into the kingdom of heaven...You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery in his heart.”



“The Fall of the Human Race” by Hans Baldung Grien - 1511



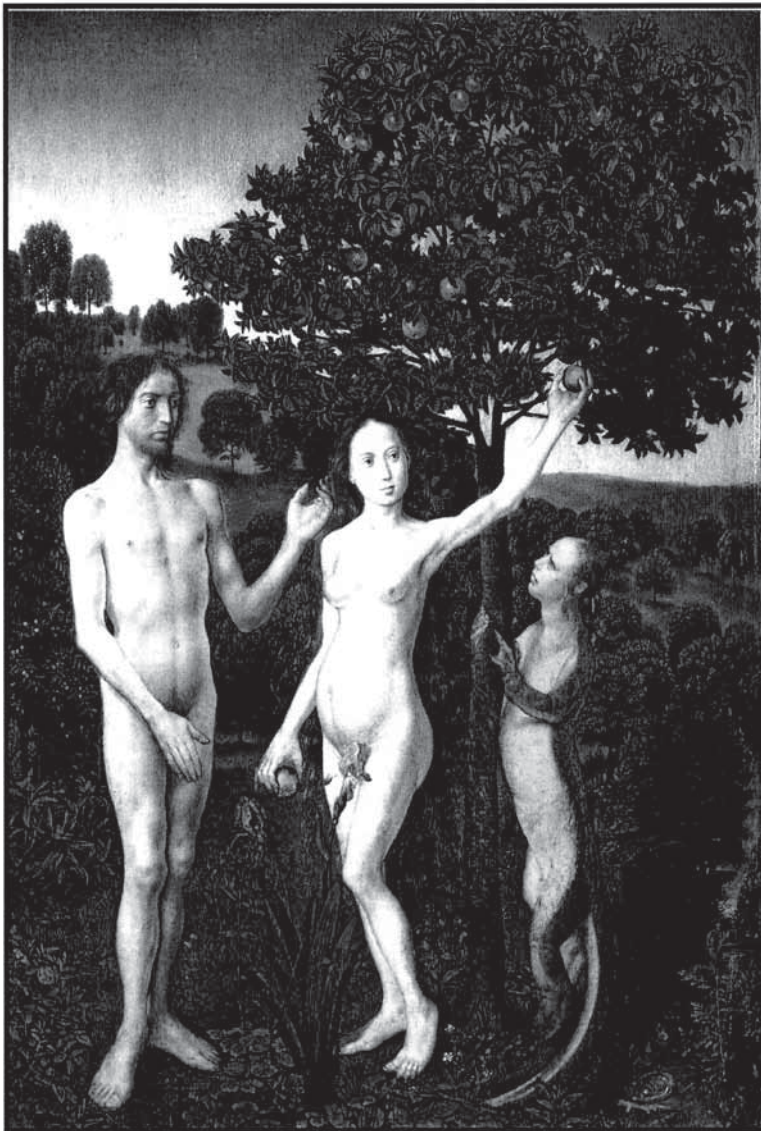
“Law and Gospel in the Garden” by Rudolf Schäfer

THE FALL INTO SIN

Sin was introduced into the perfection of God’s good creation when Eve and Adam yielded to the temptation of the devil and deliberately chose to disobey the will and command of the Creator. The Biblical account of the Fall into Sin provides a graphic description of the tactics which Satan successfully used against our first parents in the Garden of Eden. (cf. Genesis 3:1-7) He continues to use the same approach today with equally devastating results. The parallel account of the temptation of Christ (cf. Matthew 4:1-11) demonstrates that the victory of Satan is not inevitable if we will learn to pattern our lives after the *“Second Adam”* rather than the first.

THE TACTICS OF TEMPTATION

(Genesis 3:1-7)



"The Fall Into Sin" by Hugo van der Goes - 1470

STEP 1

Attack at the point of greatest vulnerability. (vs. 1)

STEP 2

Conceal your real objective by raising false questions. (vs. 1)

STEP 3

Suggest that God's commands are unrealistic and unattainable. (vs. 1)

STEP 4

Create confusion! Cast doubt on God's Word. (vs.1,2)

STEP 5

Deny the consequences of disobedience. (vs. 4)

STEP 6

Present sin as the path to happiness and self-fulfillment. (vs. 5)

STEP 7

Blend truth and falsehood together to make the lie more convincing. (vs. 5)

STEP 8
Appeal to human pride! (vs. 5)

John 8:44

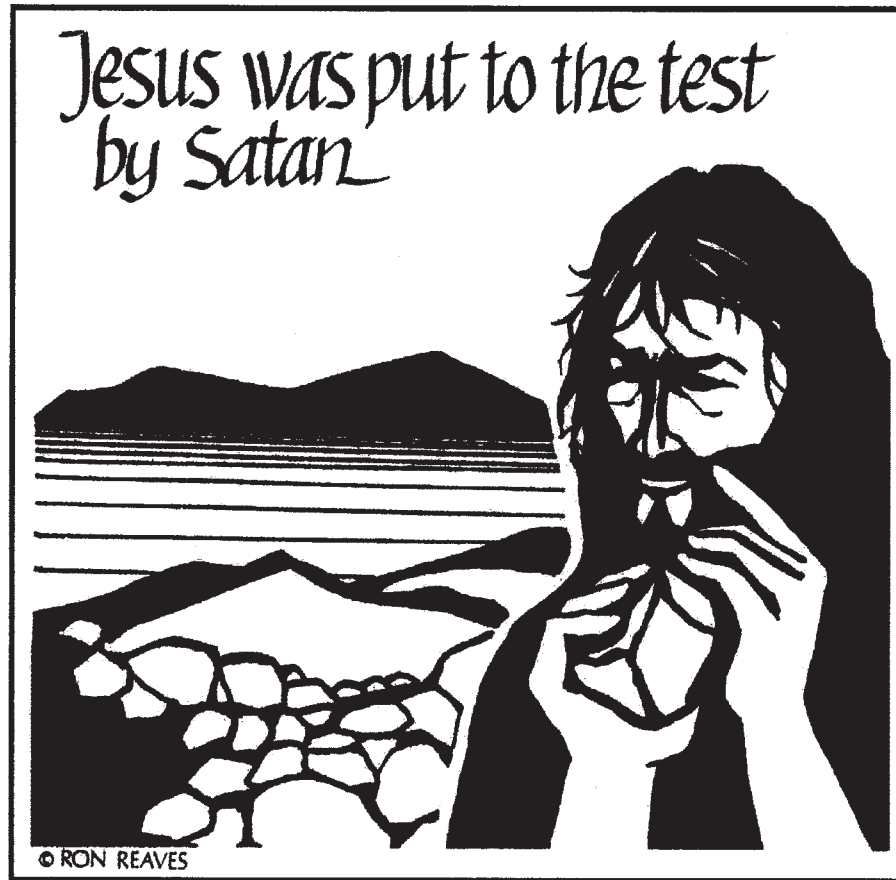
“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is not truth in him. When he lies he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

II Corinthians 2:10-11; 11:3

“If there is anything to forgive, I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes...But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”



“The Fall Into Sin and Expulsion from Paradise” by Hans Beham



COUNTER-TEMPTATION TACTICS **(Matthew 4:1-11)**

STEP 1

Focus on God's Will Instead of Personal Needs and Desires. (vs.1-4)

STEP 2

Recognize the real issue - avoid Satanic diversion. (vs.4,7,10)

STEP 3

Trust the Word of God and Wield it as your Spiritual Weapon (vs.4,7,10)

STEP 4

Do Not Be Deterred by Satan's Scripture Twisting. (vs.6)

STEP 5

Be Prepared for an Ongoing Assault - The Devil Does Not Give Up Easily
(vs.3,5,8,11)

STEP 6

Give All Glory to God and Use His Power to Defeat and Dismiss the Enemy
(vs.10)



“Get Thee Behind Me, Satan” by Rudolf Schäfer



THE AFTERMATH OF THE FALL INTO SIN

1. SHAME AND GUILT - *“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.”* (Genesis 3:7)

(Note: Adam and Eve failed to recognize the real problem. They were not ashamed of being naked. They were ashamed of themselves. They expressed their guilt by concealing the portion of their bodies used to express love, our most intimate and personal emotion. Their pathetic fig leaves are an apt symbol of all of man’s futile attempts to deal with his guilt.)

2. FEAR - *“Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”* (Genesis 3:8)

(NOTE: Man’s fear drives him to ridiculous lengths. Adam and Eve huddle in the bushes, hiding from the all powerful and all knowing God who made both them and the bushes.)

3. FALSEHOOD - *“He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.’”* (Genesis 3:10)

(NOTE: Fear produces falsehood. Adam is afraid to tell the truth because he knows what God’s judgement upon disobedience must be.)

4. FAILURE TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY - *“The man said, ‘The woman you put here with me-she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it.’”...The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me and I ate.’”* (Genesis 3:12-13)

(NOTE: Adam blames God or the woman. The woman blames the serpent. And so it begins - the endless passing of the buck which has gone on ever since.)



“The Fall” by Rembrandt

GOD'S RESPONSE TO MAN'S FALL INTO SIN

1. The righteous decree of the law must stand - ***“when you eat of it you will surely die”***

(Genesis 2:17). God who is just and holy cannot ignore, overlook, or tolerate sin. The tragic consequences of man's disobedience are clearly defined. (Genesis 3:14-19)



2. God, who is love and mercy, continues to pursue fallen mankind - ***“Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day...But the Lord God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’”*** (Genesis 3:8-9). God is unwilling to abandon us to the death and damnation we fully deserve.

3. Standing amid the ruin of His perfect creation, God makes the first promise of the Savior (*“proto-evangelium”* - *“first gospel”*). The Lord announces that He will act to undo the damage that has been done. He will pay the

price that mankind could never have paid for itself. ***“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”*** (Genesis 3:15)

DEATH - THE FINAL RESULT OF SIN

“The wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23

1. Spiritual Death - the disruption of the relationship between God and man as a consequence of unbelief and sin. There can be no real life apart from God in Christ. Those who are physically alive but trapped in unbelief and cut off from God are already dead spiritually.

John 6:53 “Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will have no life in you.’”

Ephesians 2:1 “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.”

Colossians 2:13 “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature; God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.”

I Timothy 5:6 “But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.”

Revelation 3:1 “To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of Him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds. You have a reputation of being alive but you are dead.”

2. Temporal Death - the separation of the body and the soul. Man was created to enjoy physical immortality. But under the curse of sin, body and soul are torn apart from one another. This event, so terrifying in itself, loses its terror for Christians only because through faith in Christ temporal death becomes the gateway to paradise.



*“The Triumph of Death”
by Simon Colines, 1525*

Ecclesiastes 12:7 “The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.”

Luke 23:43 “I tell you the truth, ‘Today you will be with me in paradise.’”

Psalms 23:4 “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.”



“The Triumph of Death” by Anders Trost - 1682



"The Damned in the Jaws of Hell" by Michel Le Noir - 1568

3. Eternal Death - the ultimate result of spiritual death, an eternity of torment in the undying fires of Hell. Physical death for the unbeliever is not merely the end of existence. It is, instead, the beginning of everlasting punishment.

Revelation 21:8 "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters, and all liars - their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."



“Michael the Archangel and the Dragon” by Rudolf Schärer

THE DEVIL - MANKIND’S ANCIENT FOE

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” I Peter 5:8

The Bible teaches that the devil and his demons are fallen angels who committed the sin of pride, rebelled against God, and were expelled from heaven.

Isaiah 14:12-15 “How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations. You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned upon the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ But

you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.”

Ezekial 12-15 “You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz, and emerald, chrysolite, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until wickedness was found in you.”

I Timothy 3:6 “He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil.”



*“Michael and His Angels Fought Against the Dragon and His Angels”
by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

II Peter 2:4 “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to Hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgement...”

Jude 6 “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home-these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains on the great day.”

Revelation 12:7-9 “And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

But he was not strong enough and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down-that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”



*“St. Michael Driving Satan and His Angels From Heaven”
by Albrecht Dürer*

Satan is known by many names and titles in Scripture which are descriptive of his nature and his work. They include: Satan - the Accuser (Hebrew) (Zechariah 3:1-2); Devil - the Accuser (Greek)(I Peter 5:8); Belial - Lawless One (II Corinthians 6:15); Beelzebul - Lord of the Flies (Matthew 10:25); Adversary (I Peter 5:8); Deceiver of the whole world (Revelation 12:9); Murderer (John 8:44); Father of Lies (John 8:44); Lucifer -

Morning Star (Isaiah 14:12); Great Dragon, Ancient Serpent (Revelation 12:8); Prince of Demons (Matthew 12:24); Tempter (Matthew 4:3); God of this World (II Corinthians 4:4); Unclean Spirit (Matthew 12:43); and, Wicked One (Matthew 13:19).

The Bible warns that the Devil is a powerful foe whom we dare not underestimate (Matthew 10:28; I Peter 5:8). The demons who serve him in his implacable war against God and his people are many. ***“Then Jesus asked him, ‘What is your name?’ ‘My name is Legion,’ he replied, ‘for we are many.’”***(Mark 5:9). But even Satan himself operates within the constraints of God’s

power. To use Luther’s phrase, he is *“Gottes Teufel”* (God’s Devil) cf. Job 1:6-12 His most diabolical schemes serve the purposes and plans of God. cf. Genesis 50:20. The Word of God assures Christians that this fearsome enemy has been defeated. Standing firm in the faith, we have a share in Christ’s victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil. ***“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*** (James 4:7)



“The Temptation of Christ” by Heinrich Hoffmann

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

The Origin of Evil

God did not create evil. “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31) The potential for evil came into being when God created angels and men with free will. From that point on the possibility existed that free will would be exercised in disobedience, and thus evil would become a reality. Satan seems to suggest as much when he tempts Eve with the half-truth, ***“When you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*** (Genesis 3:5).

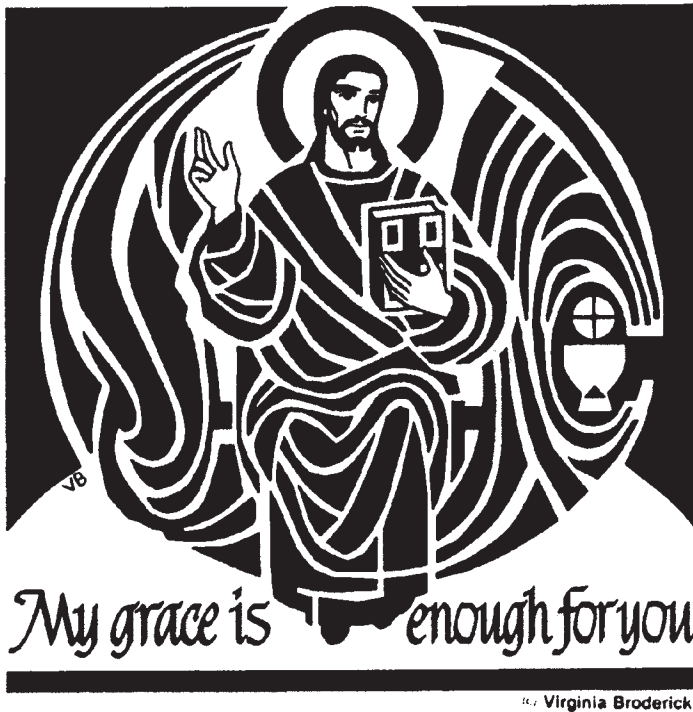
Why, then, did God endow angels and men with free will? The solution to this dilemma takes us back to the most basic question of all: Why did God create? The answer is suggested in Genesis 2 and its description of the creation of man as male and female. Having placed Adam in the midst of a perfect world, surrounded by the beauty of Eden’s garden, the text inexplicably announces; ***“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone.’”*** (Genesis 2:18) Why not? Because man was created in the image and likeness of God, with the capability to love and to be loved. Unlike man, God is perfectly self-sufficient. He has no needs and depends on no one. His action in creation was caused by nothing outside of Himself, determined solely by His own good pleasure (cf. Ephesians 1:11). And yet, God is love (cf. 2 John 4:8), and His action in creation is an expression of that love. He created man to live in loving relationship with Him. But love requires free will, for without the ability to choose there can be no love. So God, the Lover, gave man free will and in so doing created the possibility of evil. Of course, He knew that man would choose sin. But He also knew that in love He Himself would pay the price to buy man back from his sin with the blood of His own Son. Thus the reason for it all was love.

Evil and Suffering in Our World

Like many people today, the Psalmist of old was troubled by the grim reality of evil in the world. He attempted to reconcile its consequences of pain, suffering, and sorrow with the love and mercy of almighty God. He failed in that attempt and was compelled to admit: ***“When I tried to understand all this it was oppressive to me.”*** (Psalm 73:16) But instead of rejecting God, as do so many of our contemporaries, he found peace in a faith which trusted God’s Word and accepted that which reason cannot comprehend. ***“Till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny...As for me,***

it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.” (Psalm 73:16,28) We would do well to follow his example; affirming what the Bible says and recognizing the limitations of our reason.

1. God is sovereign and omnipotent. All things occur according to the determinate counsel of God. cf. Isaiah 45:7; Amos 3:6; Matthew 10:29-39.



2. Man is given the ability and the responsibility to make his own choices and remains accountable for those choices. cf. Deuteronomy 30:11-20; Romans 1:18-20; James 1:13-14.

3. While God does not desire evil, and limits its power, He does use and control it in the service of good. cf. Genesis 50:20; Job 1-2; Psalm 5:4; 33:10; Romans 8:28.

4. Suffering in the life of the believer can help to test, strengthen, and purify us in our faith, increasing our dependence on God. cf. Isaiah 48:10; Romans 8:18-39;

II Corinthians 12:7-10; Hebrews 12:4-13; I Peter 1:6-9.

5. Scripture urges the believer to trust in the love of God and cling to His promises no matter how difficult or painful the circumstances of life may become.

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised...Though He slay me yet will I hope in Him.” Job 1:21, 13:15

“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the

Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.” Habakkuk 3:17-19

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us...And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose...Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom. 8:18,28,35,37-39



*“Christos Pantocrator” Christ the Almighty Lord
5th Century Byzantine Mosaic*

UNIT IV

LAW AND GOSPEL



“The Law and the Gospel” by Lucas Cranach the Elder

“The distinction between law and Gospel is an especially brilliant light which serves the purpose that the Word of God may be rightly divided and the writings of the holy prophets and apostles may be rightly explained and understood correctly. We must therefore observe this distinction with particular diligence lest we confuse the two doctrines and change the Gospel into law. This would darken the merit of Christ and rob disturbed consciences of the comfort which they would otherwise have in the holy Gospel when it is preached purely and without admixture, for by it Christians can support themselves in their greatest temptations against the terrors of the law.” (Formula of Concord, 1577)



THE LAW

“We unanimously believe, teach, and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, in which the righteous, immutable will of God is revealed, what is to be the quality of man in his nature, thoughts, words, and works, in order that he may be pleasing to God; and that it threatens its transgressors with God’s wrath and temporal and eternal punishment.” (Formula of Concord, 1577)

God created man with an inherent understanding of His will as part of the divine image. The Bible calls this natural knowledge of right and wrong the Law written in man’s heart or conscience. (cf. Romans 2:14,15) Even in the aftermath of the Fall, impaired and distorted by sin, conscience remains as a witness to the will of the Creator. Conscience, however is no longer a completely reliable moral guide. It may be conditioned by human rules and restrictions to prohibit that which God does not. On the other hand, conscience can become **“hardened”** to sin so that it no longer warns the sinner against transgression.

(cf. Romans 1:21; Ephesians 4:18-19; I Corinthians 8:7) God also reveals His Law in Scripture. The written Law was given in summary form to the Children of Israel through Moses on Mt. Sinai (cf. Exodus 20:1-21). In the Ten Commandments God told Israel how His holy will for all mankind applied to them in a special way as his chosen people. The New Testament repeats the moral content of the commandments in a more general context for all people (cf. Matthew 5:17-48; 19:17-18; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:19).

Our Lord provides the simplest summary of the Law: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...Love your neighbor as yourself.”* (Matthew 22:37-40).



The Purpose of the Law

- 1. CURB - The Law helps to preserve order in the world by restraining the wicked actions of men.**
- 2. MIRROR - The Law accuses us and shows us our sin.**
- 3. GUIDE - The Law shows Christians the way that God would have us live.**

THE GOSPEL

“The Gospel, however, is that doctrine which teaches what a man should believe in order to receive the forgiveness of sins from God, since man has failed to keep the Law of God and has transgressed it, his corrupted nature, thoughts, words, and deeds war against the Law, and he is therefore subject to the wrath of God, to death, to temporal miseries, and to the punishment of hell-fire. The content of the Gospel is this, that the Son of God, Christ our Lord, himself assumed and bore the curse of the Law and expiated and paid for all our sins, that through Him alone we re-enter the good graces of God, obtain forgiveness of sins through faith, are freed from death and all the punishments of sin, and are saved eternally. For everything which comforts and offers the mercy and grace of God to transgressors of the Law strictly speaking is, and is called, the Gospel a good and joyful message that God wills not to punish sins but to forgive them for Christ’s sake.” (Formula of Concord, 1577)



While the Law is revealed in nature, conscience, and the Bible, the Gospel is revealed to us only in the Bible.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him - but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit.”

Ephesians 3: 2-5 “Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets.”

In the Gospel, and in the Gospel alone, God offers the forgiveness of sins, the good news that we are freed from guilt, the punishment, and the power of sin, and are saved eternally because of what God in Christ has done for us. The Gospel enables us to live a God pleasing life, not because of guilt or fear, but in joyful thanksgiving to the God of our salvation.

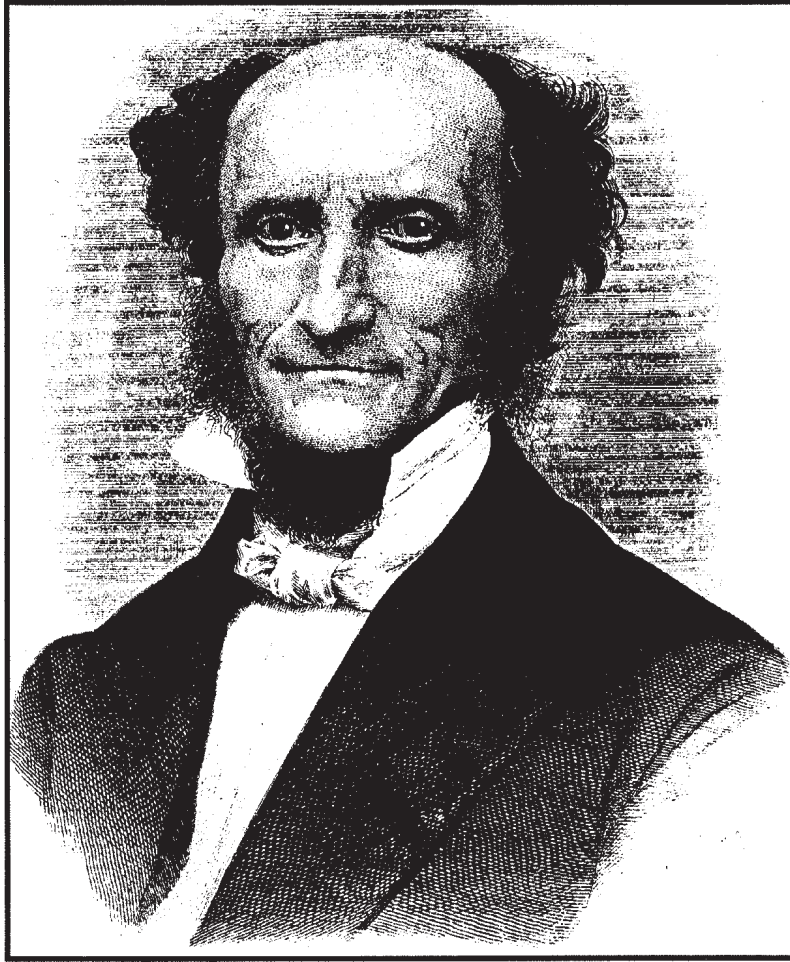


“The Death of Christ on the Cross” by Lucas Cranach

“The Gospel in a Nutshell”

“God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16



The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel

C.F.W. Walther

1884

- 1. The doctrinal content of all of Holy Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, consists of two diametrically opposite teachings, namely the Law and the Gospel.*
- 2. Only he is a pure teacher who not only presents all articles of faith in accordance with Scripture but also correctly distinguishes between Law and Gospel.*
- 3. To distinguish properly between Law and Gospel is the most difficult and exalted skill of Christians and theologians, a skill that only the Holy Spirit teaches in the school of experience.*

4. *The true knowledge of the difference between Law and Gospel is not only a glorious light for the correct understanding of all of Holy Scripture, but without such knowledge Scripture is and remains a closed book.*

5. *The first and most glaring way of mingling Law and Gospel is the teaching of the papists, Socinians, and rationalists that makes of Christ a new Moses or Lawgiver and turns the Gospel into a doctrine of works and, conversely, like the papists, condemns and anathematizes those who teach the Gospel as a message of God's free grace in Christ.*

6. *Secondly, God's Word is not rightly divided when the Law is not preached in its full severity nor the Gospel in its full sweetness, but when Gospel elements are mingled with the Law and Law elements with the Gospel.*

7. *God's Word is not rightly divided, in the third place, when the Gospel is preached first and then the Law, first sanctification and then justification, first faith and then contrition, first good works and then grace.*

8. *In the fourth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when the Law is preached to those already terrified because of their sins, or when the Gospel is preached to those who are secure in their sins.*

9. *In the fifth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when sinners, struck and terrified by the Law, instead of being directed to Word and sacrament, are instructed to strive for the state of grace through prayer and struggles, that is, to keep on praying and wrestling until they feel that God has pardoned them.*

10. *In the sixth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when faith is pictured either as if merely regarding something as true would justify and save in spite of mortal sins, or as if faith justifies and saves for the sake of the love and renewal it effects.*

11. *In the seventh place, God's Word is not rightly divided if one wants to offer the comfort of the Gospel only to those who, through the Law, experience contrition not out of fear of God's wrath but out of love of God.*

12. *In the eighth place, God's Word is not rightly divided if the impression is given that contrition is a cause of forgiveness of sins alongside of faith.*

13. *In the ninth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when faith is demanded in such a way as if a person could give it to himself, or at least contribute something toward it instead of seeking to preach faith into the heart by presenting the promises of the Gospel.*

14. *In the tenth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when faith is demanded as a condition of justification and salvation, as though a person becomes righteous before God and is saved not only through faith, but also because of faith, for the sake of faith, and in view of faith.*

15. In the eleventh place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Gospel is turned into a preaching of repentance.

16. In the twelfth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when it is suggested that shedding certain vices and performing certain works and virtues is a true conversion.

17. In the thirteenth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when believers are pictured in a way that does not fit all believers in all times with regard both to strength of faith and the feelings and fruitfulness connected with it.

18. In the fourteenth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when the universal corruption of mankind is described as if true believers were living in dominating and willful sins.

19. In the fifteenth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when the preacher gives the impression that certain sins are not in themselves damnable but only venial.

20. In the sixteenth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when salvation is linked to membership in the visible orthodox church and salvation is denied to anyone who errs in any article of faith.

21. In the seventeenth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when it is taught that the sacraments have a salutary effect even if they are merely performed "ex opere operato".

22. In the eighteenth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when a false distinction is made between awakening and conversion, and not being able to believe is confused with not being permitted to believe.

23. In the nineteenth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when the attempt is made to induce the unregenerate by means of the demands, threats, and promises of the Law to renounce sin and do good works, and thus make them pious, and to impel the regenerate toward the good by means of legalistic demands rather than by evangelical exhortation.

24. In the twentieth place, God's Word is not rightly divided when the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit is described because of its magnitude.

25. In the twenty-first place, God's Word is not rightly divided when the preacher does not, in general, let the Gospel predominate.

(Law and Gospel, by C.F.W. Walther, Herbert J.A. Bouman - Translator. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1981)

UNIT V

JESUS CHRIST

SAVIOR OF THE WORLD



“The Word Became Flesh” by Rudolf Schäfer

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it...The Word became flesh and lived for a time among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:1-5, 14

“I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death. All this he did that I should be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as He is risen from the death and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.”
Martin Luther, Small Catechism, 1529



*“I Believe That Jesus Christ is My Lord” - Martin Luther
by Rudolf Schäfer*

TRUE MAN - TRUE GOD THE DOCTRINE OF THE TWO NATURES IN CHRIST



“Christ as the Almighty Judge of the World” 13 Century Byzantine Mosaic

In the person of Jesus Christ God and man become one. We use the word “*incarnation*” (“*to become flesh*” - John 1:14) to describe this reality.

Jesus is true God, the second member of the Trinity, begotten of the Father from eternity. He is and has all that God is and has. He is immortal, eternal, almighty, all-knowing, and present everywhere; divine in every sense of that term. (cf. Matthew 9:6; 28:18,20; John 1:1-3; 20:28; 21:17; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:5; Hebrews 1:3; 13:8; I John 5:20)

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Philippians 2:5-11

Jesus is true man, with a human body and soul. He is like us in every way except sin, voluntarily submitting to the restrictions and limitations of human existence. Jesus was born and He grew to manhood. He rejoiced and He wept. He hungered and He ate. He thirsted and He drank. He slept and He woke. He was anxious and He hoped. He knew pain, suffering and death; like us in every way except sin. (cf. Matthew 4:2; 26:38; Luke 24:39; John 11:35; 19:28; I Timothy 2:5)

“Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death...For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted...For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin.” Hebrews 2:14-15,17-18; 4:15

From the instant of His conception in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ is both true God and true man. This is not a matter of component parts. The two natures are inseparable from one another. Jesus is not part man and part God. He is the God/Man. This “*personal union*” of the divine and human in Christ is permanent.

To be our Lord and Savior Jesus must be both true God and true man. Both natures are essential for the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation. To deny or to minimize

either the divine or the human nature of Jesus Christ jeopardizes the entire plan of salvation. As true man Jesus submitted to the Law for us and suffered and died in our place. As true God Jesus fulfilled the Law perfectly and offered His innocent death as the sufficient ransom for the sins of mankind. He is true man and true God *“for us men and for our salvation”* (Nicene Creed, 325AD)



“The Visions of the Prophet” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

MESSIANIC PROPHECY

“The New Testament was in the Old concealed; The Old is in the New revealed.” - St. Augustine

God progressively disclosed His plan of salvation through the prophets of the Old Testament. Although the prophets themselves often did not understand the promises they were called to deliver (I Peter 1:10-12), they provided a complete description of the coming Messiah (Hebrew title - *“The Anointed One”*; Greek equivalent - *“Christ”*).



“And He will be called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6) by Rudolf Schärer

The life and ministry of Jesus matches that description in every detail. The writers of the New Testament cite 226 OT prophecies which were directly fulfilled in Christ. The fulfillment of the ancient prophecies in Christ is the major theme of the apostolic proclamation of the Gospel. Thus, for example, Peter declares: ***“The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified His Servant, Jesus...Indeed, all the prophets, from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days.”*** (Acts 3:13,24) The following is a partial list of Messianic prophecies and their fulfillment in the life and ministry of Jesus.

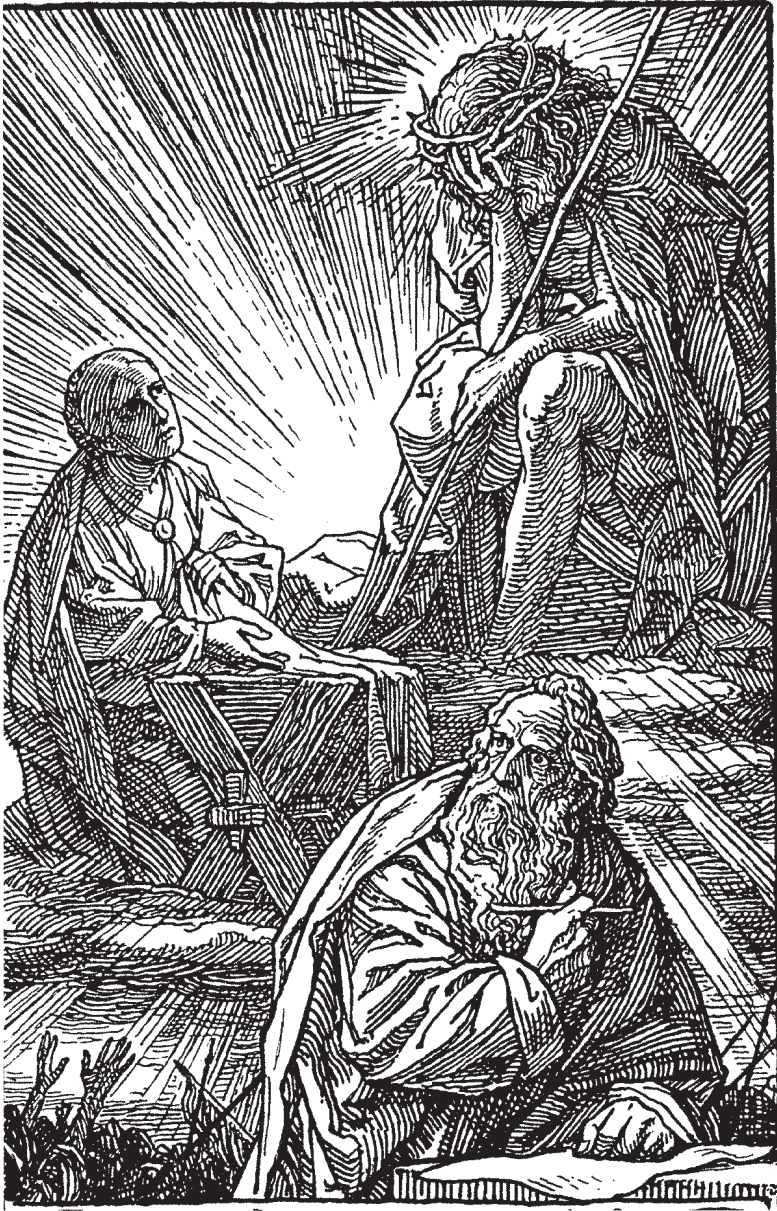
Messiah will be a man, the seed of the woman, who will crush Satan and destroy him but at painful cost (Genesis 3:15 - Matthew 1:18; Hebrews 2:14;)

Messiah will be the Son of God (Psalm 2:7 - Luke 1:32-35)

Messiah will be a descendant of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 17:7; 22:18; - Galatians 3:16)

Messiah will be a descendant of Isaac (Genesis 21:12 - Hebrews 11:18)

Messiah will be from the royal tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10 - Hebrews 7:14)



"The Prophet Isaiah" by Rudolf Schäfer

*Messiah will be a descendant of David (Psalm 132:11; Jeremiah 23:5 - Acts 13:23; Romans 1:3)
The time of the Messiah's coming and death (Daniel 9:24-27 - Luke 2:1)*

Messiah will be born of a Virgin as Immanuel (God With Us) (Isaiah 7:14 - Matthew 1:18,22-23; Luke 2:7)

Messiah will be born in Bethlehem of Judea (Micah 5:2 - Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4-6)

Messiah's birth will be announced by the appearance of a star (Numbers 24:17 - Matthew 2:1-11)

Great men shall come and bow to him (Psalm 72: 10-15 - Matthew 2:1-11)

Innocent children will die in an attempt to slay him (Jeremiah 31:15 - Matthew 2:16-18)

His coming will be proclaimed by the Forerunner (that is, John the Baptist) (Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1 -Matthew 1-3; Luke 1:17)

Messiah will be anointed with power by the Holy Spirit (Psalm

45:7; Isaiah 11:2 - Matthew 3:16-17; John 3:34; Acts 10:38)

Messiah will be a great prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18 - Acts 3:20-22)

Messiah will come to deliver his people (Isaiah 61:1-3 - Luke 4:16-21,43)

Messiah will bring light to Galilee (Isaiah 9:1-3 - Matthew 4:12-16)

Messiah will cleanse the temple of God (Haggai 2:7-9; Malachi 3:1 - Luke 19:45; John 2:13-16)

Messiah will live in poverty (Isaiah 53:2 - Mark 6:3; Luke 9:58)

Messiah will practice meekness and humility (Isaiah 42:1-2 - Philippians 2:7-9)
Messiah will demonstrate compassion (Isaiah 40:11; 42:3 - Matthew 12:15-20; Hebrews 4:15)
Messiah will be without guile (Isaiah 53:9 - I Peter 2:22)
Messiah will have great zeal for the House of God (Psalm 69:9 - John 2:17)
Messiah will teach using parables (Psalm 78:2 - Matthew 13:34-35)
Messiah will validate his ministry with great miracles of healing (Isaiah 35:5-6 - Luke 7:18-23)
Messiah will be rejected by his brethren (Psalm 69:8; Isaiah 53:3 - John 1:11; 7:5)
Messiah will be hated by the Jews (Psalm 69:4; Isaiah 49:7 - John 15:24-25)
Messiah will be spurned by the rulers of Israel (Psalm 118:22 - John 15:48; Matthew 21:42)
Messiah will be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (Isaiah 8:14 - Romans 9:32; I Peter 2:8)
Messiah will be betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9; 55:12-14 - John 13:18-21)
Messiah will be forsaken by his disciples (Zechariah 13:7 - Matthew 26:31-56)
Messiah will be sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12 - Matthew 26:15)
The profit of betrayal will be used to buy a potter's field (Zechariah 11:13 - Matthew 27:7)
Messiah will endure all of his suffering patiently and silently (Isaiah 53:7 - Matthew 26:63; 27:12-14)
Messiah's face will be beaten (Micah 5:1 - Matthew 27:30)
Messiah will endure intense suffering (Psalm 22: 14-15 - Luke 22:42-44)
Messiah will be scourged and spit upon (Psalm 35: 15; Isaiah 1:6 - Mark 14:1)
Messiah's face will be disfigured almost beyond recognition (Isaiah 52: 14; 53:3 - John 19:1-5)
Messiah's death will serve as an atoning sacrifice to justify many (Isaiah 53:4-6; Daniel 9:26 - Matthew 20:28; 26:28)
Jewish and Gentile rulers will conspire to kill him (Psalm 2:1-4 - Luke 23:12; Acts 4:27-28)
The hands and feet of the Messiah will be pierced in death (Psalm 22:16 - John 19:18; 20:25)
Messiah will be executed among thieves (Isaiah 53:12 - Mark 15:28)
Messiah will be given gall and vinegar to drink (Psalm 69:21 - Matthew 27:34)
Messiah will be cruelly mocked by his enemies (Psalm 22:7; 35:15-21 - Matthew 27: 39-44)
Messiah will suffer alone; even the Father's presence will be withdrawn (Isaiah 63:1-3; Psalm 22:1 - Matthew 27:46)

His enemies will gamble to divide his clothes among themselves (Psalm 22:18 - Matthew 27:35)

Messiah will pray for those who murder him (Isaiah 53:12 - Luke 23:34)

Messiah's body will be pierced after his death (Zechariah 12:10 - John 19:34-37)

No bone of his body will be broken (Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20 - John 19:33-36)

Messiah will be buried among the wealthy (Isaiah 53:9 - Matthew 27: 57-60)

Messiah's body will not decay in the grave (Psalm 16:8-10 - Acts 2:31)

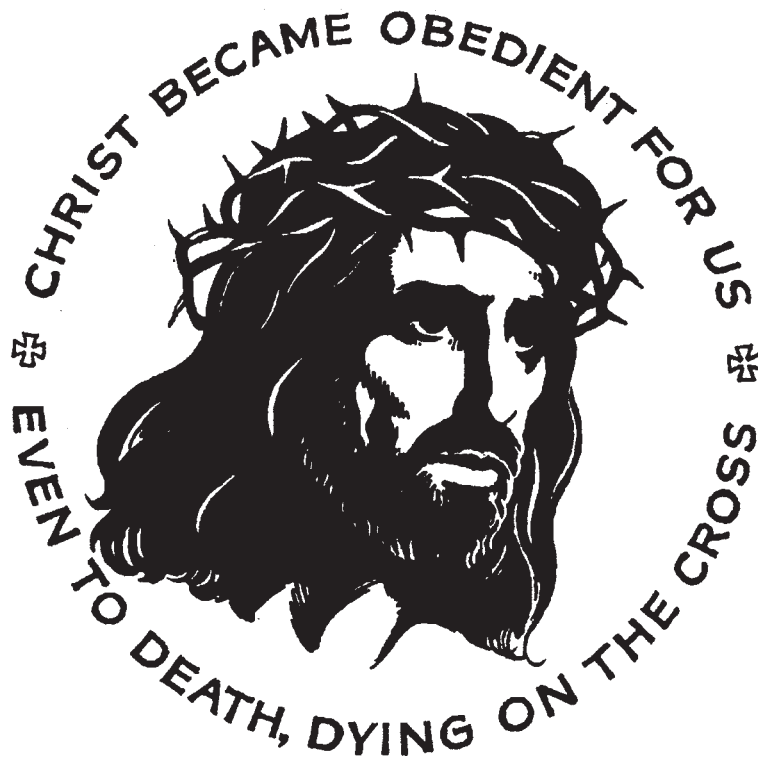
Messiah will rise from the dead on the third day (Psalm 16:8-10; Hosea 6:1-2 - Luke 24:6,31,34)

Messiah will ascend into the heavens (Psalm 68:18; 24:7-9 - Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9)



"A Shoot Will Come Up from the Stump of Jesse" (Isaiah 11:1)

CHRIST'S STATE OF HUMILIATION



Philippians 2:6-8

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!”

During the days of Jesus' life on earth our Lord did not always or fully use the divine power and glory that were rightfully His as the eternal Son of God (State of Humiliation). This voluntary renunciation of His divine attributes made it possible for Christ to live as a human being and to suffer and die in our place upon the cross. Jesus' willingness to humble himself in this way was the result of His love for us. (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:9) The Apostles Creed summarizes the State of Humiliation in this way: *“He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.”*



“The Madonna With the Christ Child” by Albrecht Dürer

“CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY”

Holy Scripture teaches that Jesus Christ was conceived in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mary did not have sexual intercourse prior to the birth of Christ.

“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had

in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because he will save His people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel - which means, 'God with Us'.' (Matthew 1:18-25; cf. Luke 1:26-38)

"But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." (Galatians 4:4-5)



"The Birth of the Savior" by Rudolf Schäfer



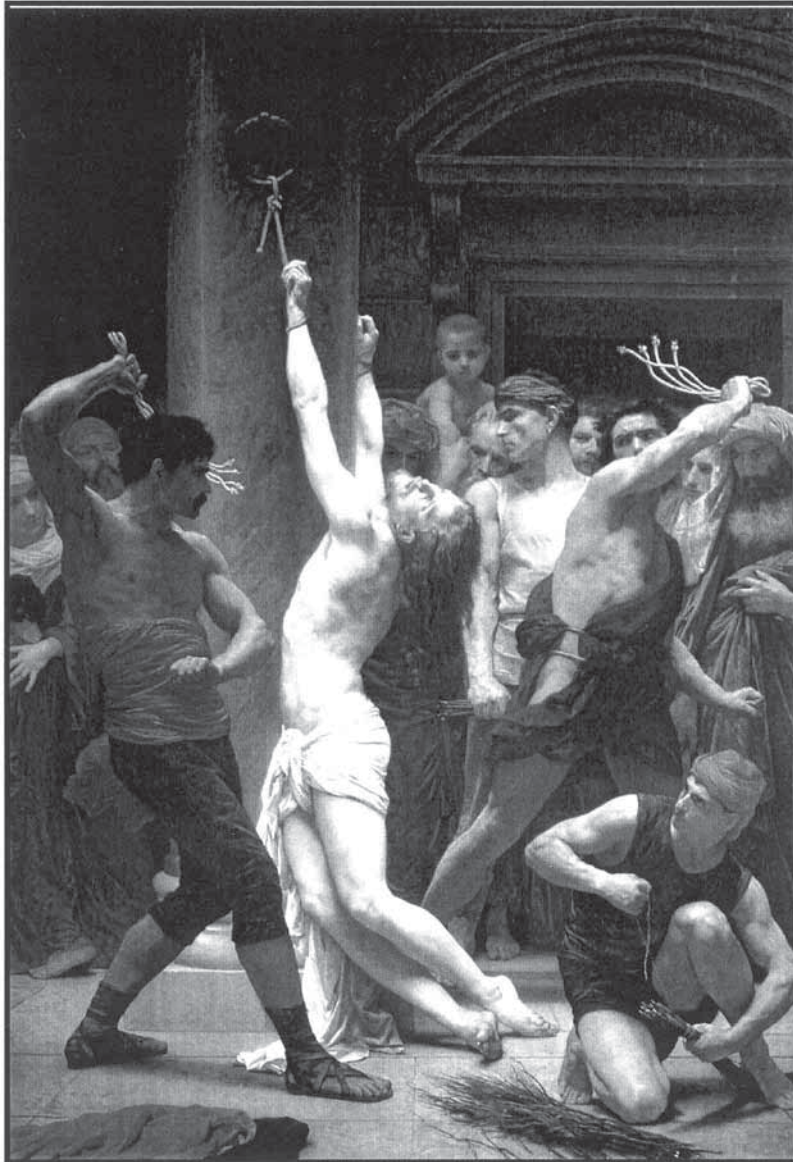
The doctrine of the Virgin Birth of our Lord is of critical importance for two reasons:

- 1. The Virgin Birth proves that Jesus Christ is true God, *“begotten of the Father from eternity”* (Nicene Creed, 325 AD).**
- 2. The Virgin Birth fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 - *“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel.”***

Mary, the mother of God, is to be honored and respected as a humble believer who willingly submitted to the will of the heavenly Father. Gabriel's salutation to the maiden of Nazareth was fitting and proper: ***"Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."*** (Luke 1:28) The consideration of Mary's example, along with those of other Biblical heroes and heroines of the faith, can be a source of great encouragement for believers today. Scripture does not directly address the question of Mary's "perpetual virginity" (cf. Matthew 1:25; Luke 2:7) although the New Testament does refer to ***"brothers"*** and ***"sisters"*** of the Lord (cf. Matthew 13:55; 27:56; Mark 3:31; 6:3; I Corinthians 9:5; Galatians 1:19) The Roman Catholic dogmas of the *"Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary"* (that Mary was conceived without the taint of original sin - 1854) and the *"Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary"* (that Mary did not experience the decay of physical death but was bodily assumed into heaven - 1950) are completely without Biblical support. The view of Mary as intercessor to whom the prayers of the faithful should be addressed infringes upon the role of Christ as sole Mediator and must therefore be rejected. *"Even though she is worthy of the highest honors, she does not want to be put on the same level as Christ but to have her example considered and followed. The fact of the matter is that in popular estimation the blessed Virgin has completely replaced Christ. Men have invoked her, trusted in her, and sought through her to appease Christ, as though he were not a propitiator but only a terrible judge and avenger."* (Apology to the Augsburg Confession, 1530)



© Virginia Broderick



“The Scourging” by Adolphe-William Bouguereau

“SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE”

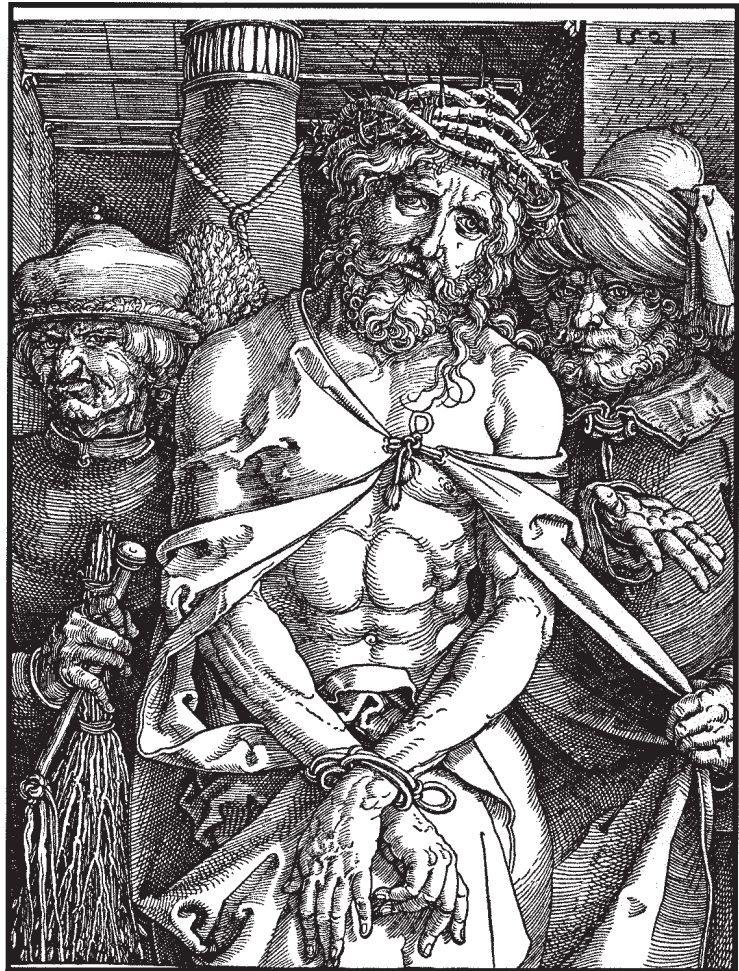
“He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not...He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgement he was taken away.” Isaiah 53:3,7-8

Throughout His earthly life Christ endured poverty, contempt, and persecution. Israel's rejection of its Messiah culminated in His arrest, interrogation, and trials before the Jewish Sanhedrin and the Roman Procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate. The Biblical accounts of these events reveal an eyewitness familiarity with the intricacies Jewish internal politics and Roman judicial procedures. The sequence of events in the arrest and trials of Jesus may be summarized as follows:

1. Christ is seized by detachments of Temple guards and Roman soldiers in the Garden of Gethsemane. His disciples flee in panic.

2. Christ is taken for interrogation to the palace of Annas, a powerful leader of the Sadducees. Five of his sons and one grandson served in the office of High priest. A contemporary passage from the Talmud laments the corrupting influence of Annas and his family: *"What a plague is the family of Annas; cursed be their hissing of vipers!...They are high priests themselves, their sons are treasurers, their son-in-laws are commanders, and their servants strike the people with staves."* Annas fails in his attempt to secure incriminating information from Jesus.

3. Christ appears before an illegal midnight session of the Great Sanhedrin. The ruling Council of the Jews consisted of seventy-one members representing the two dominant factions, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Joseph ben Caiaphas, son-in-law of Annas and current High Priest, presided. It is unclear how many members of the Council were actually present for this meeting. Twenty-three of the seventy-one were required for quorum. Caiaphas was unable to obtain the required testimony from



"The Man of Sorrows" by Albrecht Dürer



“Christ Taken From Caiaphas to Pilate” by J. James Tissot

at least two witnesses. He then demanded, ***“I charge you under oath by the living God; tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”*** The Lord responded, ***“Yes, it is as you say.”*** (Matthew 26:63,64) The High Priest denounced this answer as blasphemy and the Council condemned Jesus. Following the decision, Jesus was beaten and abused by the Temple guards.

4. The night’s proceedings had to be ratified by a legal meeting of the Sanhedrin to technically conform to the requirements of the law. This second session was convened at dawn on Friday in compliance with the stipulation that a criminal trial could not be held during the hours of darkness. The verdict was repeated and the sentence of death decreed. Jesus was taken to the Roman governor because the Jews no longer had the authority to implement the death penalty.

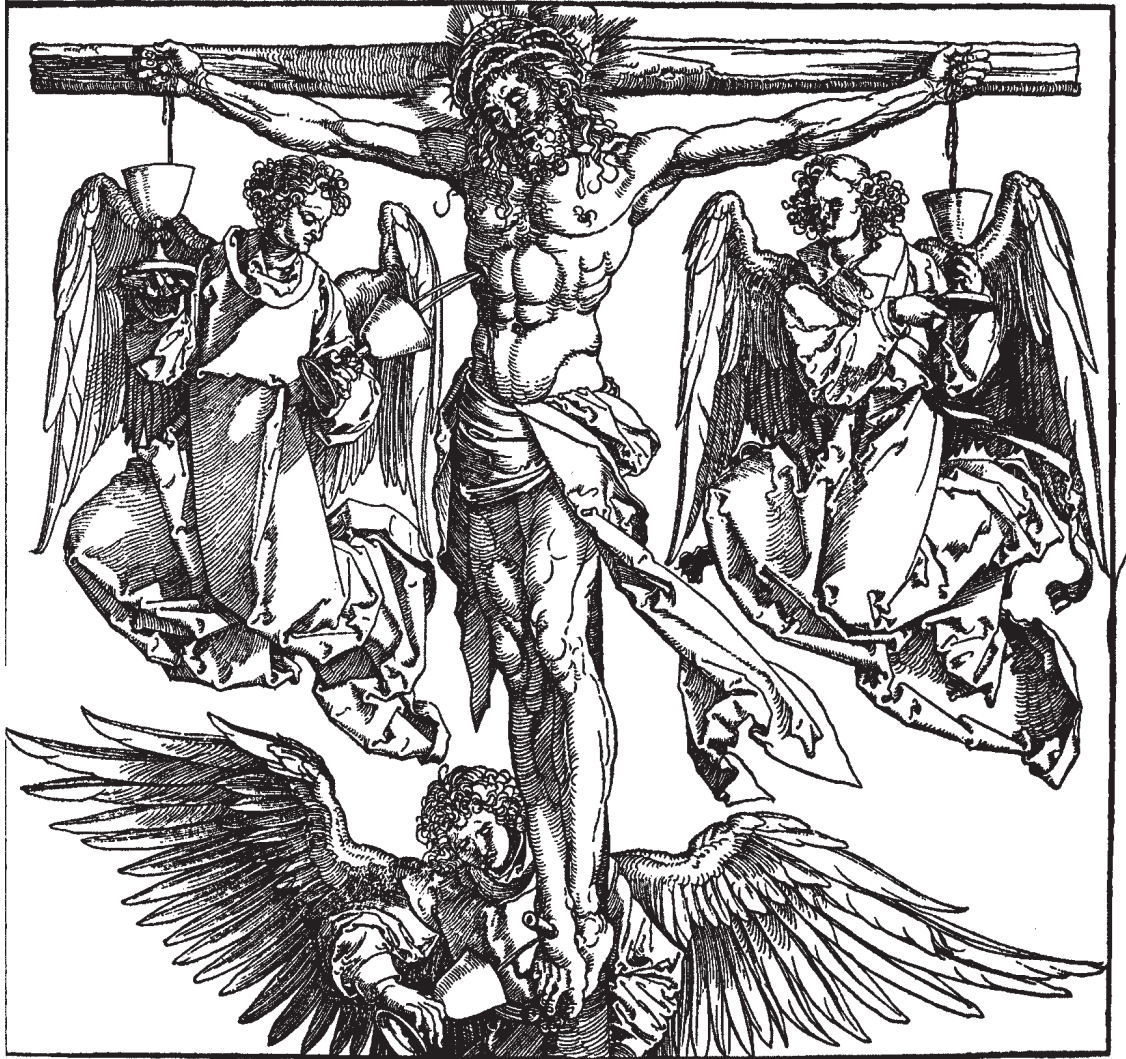
5. Jesus was arraigned before Pontius Pilate, Procurator of the Roman province of Judea. The charge has now shifted to treason and sedition. Pilate interviews Jesus and declares Him to be innocent. The Jewish leaders object vigorously. When Pilate hears that Christ is from Galilee he sends Him to King Herod Antipas, the Roman ruler of that province, who is in Jerusalem for the festival.

6. King Herod is delighted to have the opportunity to be entertained by this famous miracle worker. He questions Jesus and urges Him to perform some miraculous feat. Jesus refuses to dignify this charade with any response. The frustrated ruler and his officers then mock and abuse the Lord but Herod wisely declines to take responsibility for His condemnation. Instead, Herod Antipas sends Jesus back to Pilate for formal judgment.

7. Pilate again contends that there is no basis for condemnation. Barabbas is released instead of Jesus in the Pascal Amnesty. Pilate has Jesus flogged and presented to the crowd which demands His death. Pilate then yields and sentences Jesus to be crucified. He is beaten once again and taken to the place of execution.



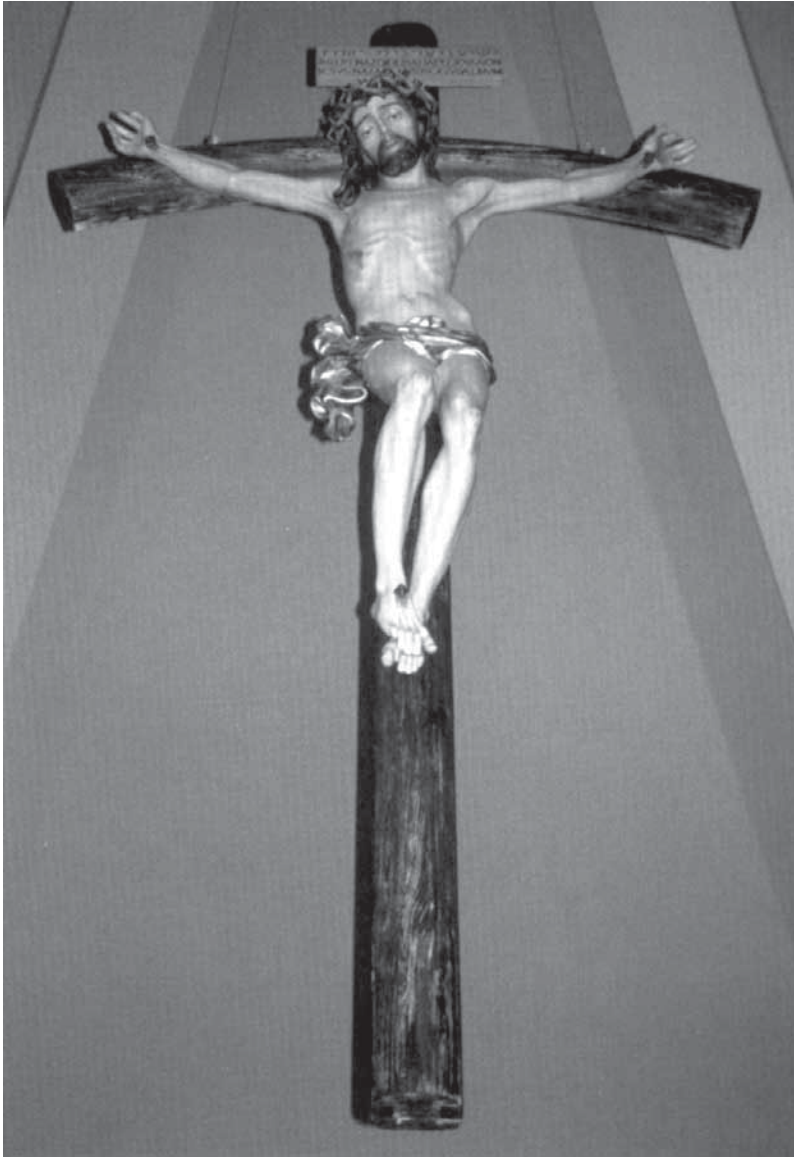
“Christ Mocked Before Herod” by J. James Tissot



"The Crucifixion" by Albrecht Dürer

"CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED"

All four Gospels include accounts of the crucifixion, the climactic event of Jesus' role as the Suffering Servant. (Matthew 27:31-50; Mark 15:20-37; Luke 23:26-46; John 19:16-30) Death by crucifixion was a particularly gruesome and excruciating method of execution reserved for rebellious slaves and those found guilty of treason against Rome. Most Christians have little awareness of the agony which Christ endured to pay the awful price for our salvation. Study of extra-Biblical historical sources and recent archaeological discoveries have confirmed the precise accuracy of the Gospel accounts. Popular misunderstandings of Christ's crucifixion are most often the result of artistic misrepresentation. The Romans typically proceeded in this way:

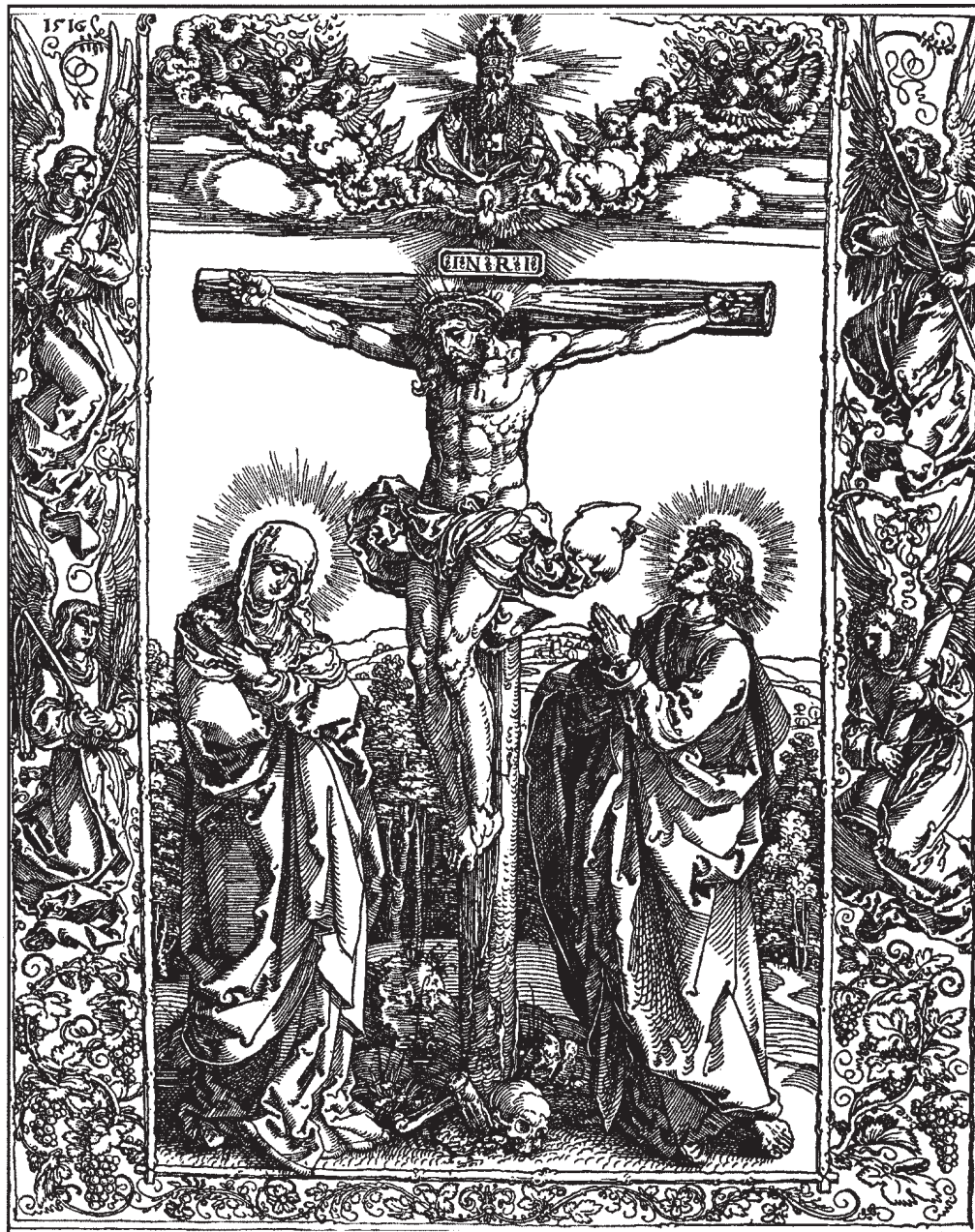


"Our Lord Upon the Cross" by Ivo Demetz

1. After sentence was pronounced the victim was stripped and scourged. The condemned man was bound to a pillar and beaten with an instrument called the "*flagrum*". The "*flagrum*" consisted of a short handle to which were attached several long, thick leather thongs. Near the end of the thongs small pieces of bone and balls of lead were attached, designed to flay the skin and tear away the muscle tissue beneath. Scourging cut into the muscle and tore loose ribbons of flesh causing extreme pain and blood loss. This preliminary activity was designed to intensify the agony of the crucifixion itself. Among the Jews no more than 40 strokes of the "*flagrum*" were allowed. The Romans had no such restrictions. Their only guideline was that the victim was not to be killed. That was a task reserved for the cross itself.

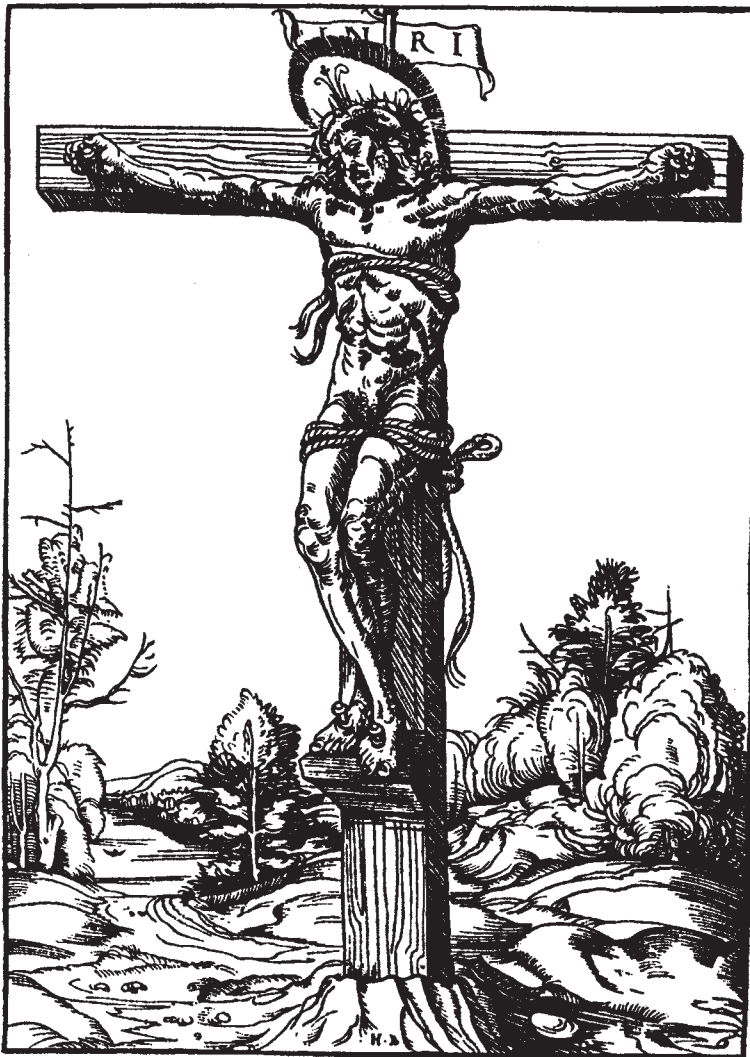
2. The cross itself consisted of two pieces. The "*stipes crucis*" or trunk of the cross was the vertical beam planted permanently in the ground at the place of execution. The vertical beam of the cross was typically between 6 and 7 feet in length. The horizontal beam of the cross was called the "*patibulum*". The "*patibulum*" was 5 to 6 feet long and weighed between 75 and 125 pounds. In some cases a horizontal wooden hook was attached to the front of the vertical beam about half way down. It was called the "*sedile*" or seat. The "*sedile*" was designed to pass between the thighs of the victim and help support the weight of the body at the perineum. It served to prolong the process of death and was often honed to a sharp edge so that it would cut into the victim's flesh as he

rested upon it. Most Roman cities had a specific location designated for this purpose, placed in such a way that a maximum number of the populace would have the opportunity to witness Roman justice at work. In Rome, for example, the “*Campus Esquilinus*” was the traditional place of crucifixion. Its counterpart in Jerusalem, of course, was “*Golgotha*,” the place of the Skull.



“*The Crucifixion*” by Albrecht Dürer

3. When the scourging was complete, the victim who remained nude and without benefit of food or water was forced to carry his *“patibulum”* from the place of sentencing to the place of execution. The beam was placed on his lacerated shoulders and his outstretched arms were bound to it. Here we see a slight difference between the Gospel texts and normal Roman procedure. ***“After they had mocked him they put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.”*** (Matthew 27:31) The requirements of



Jewish modesty were respected as Jesus was paraded through the streets lest the crowds be given an excuse for riot. But once the execution began, Roman custom again prevailed. ***“When they had crucified him they divided up his clothes by casting lots.”*** (Matthew 27:35) Our Lord was not spared any of the humiliation which was normally so much a part of crucifixion. An orderly military procession was formed. First came the centurion in charge of the event carrying a wooden placard called the *“titulus”* on the end of a long pole. The *“titulus”* provided the name of the prisoner and the crime for which he had been condemned. In Christ’s case, Pilate’s sarcastic inscription read ***“Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews”*** (The Latin text of the inscription is traditionally depicted with the

abbreviation - INRI). Then came the prisoner himself, carrying the *“patibulum”* strapped across his shoulders, preceded and followed by the soldiers of the guard detail. Artists have typically depicted Jesus dragging the entire cross down the Via Dolorosa. The Gospels, however, use the word *“drag”*, not *“carry,”* reflecting actual Roman practice.

4. Upon arrival at the place of crucifixion, the prisoner was unbound and laid on the ground on his back with his shoulders resting on the “*patibulum*”. He was then fastened to the beam by 5 to 7 inch nails driven through the bony structure of the wrist, severing the median nerve and causing excruciating pain. The prisoner was then brought to his feet and backed up to the vertical “*stipes crucis*”. The “*patibulum*” would then be lifted into place in a precut notch in the top of the upright. His feet were raised off the ground and nailed to the upright beam through the bones of the heels. The centurion would lean the long pole carrying the “*titulus*” against the back of the cross so that the placard would appear above the head of the crucified. In this very practical manner both the prisoner and the crime for which he had been condemned were clearly identified as a warning to all those who might have considered opposing the imperial power of Rome.

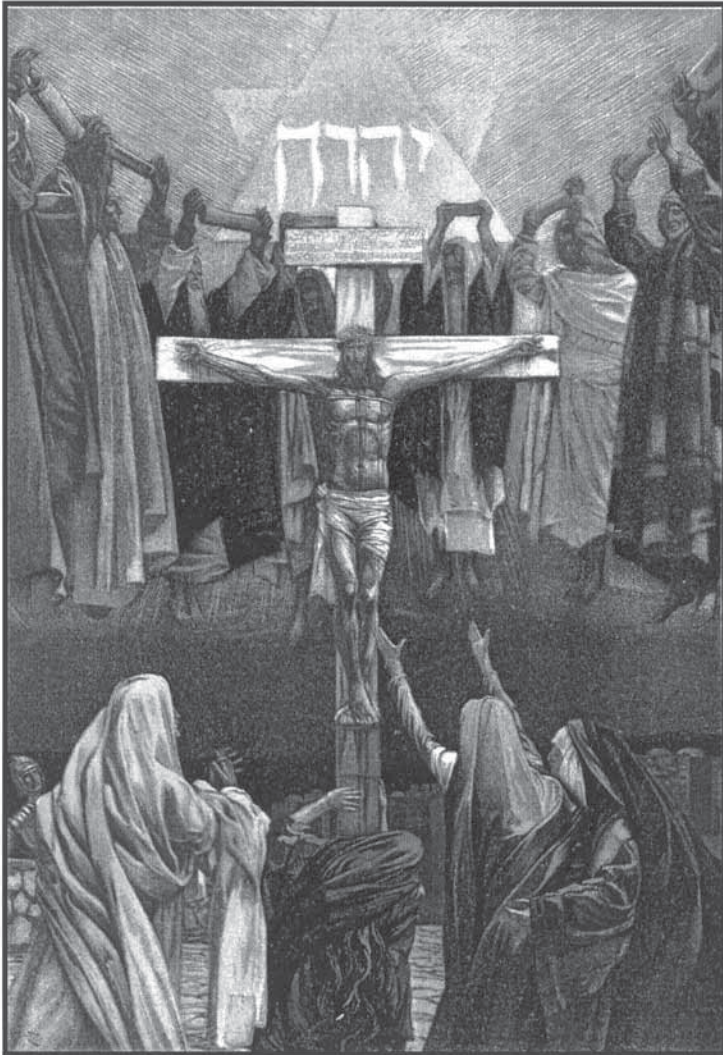


“Christ on the Cross”

Woodcarving by Nikolaus Gerhaert - 1406

5. Crucifixion was intended to cause a gradual, agonizing death. It often took days for the crucified to die. The actual cause of death was asphyxia caused by shock and suffocation. Suspended from the nails piercing his wrists, the crucified could only breathe by raising himself up and shifting his weight to the nails driven through his heels. After a brief interval the pain would become too intense and he would slump forward again. Shortly thereafter the symptoms of suffocation would recur and he would desperately raise up once more. As the victim slowly grew weaker, the intervals in this excruciating pattern would shorten until he could no longer relieve the pressure on his lungs. Death by suffocation was the inevitable result. If the Roman executioner had reason to shorten

the process the shins of the crucified were smashed against the cross with an instrument called the “*crurifragium*” (the “*crusher*”). Once the bones of the lower legs had been shattered it was no longer possible for the crucified to raise himself up and death would come quickly. The Gospels tell us that this was the fate of the two thieves crucified with Christ (John 19:32).



“It Is Finished” by J. James Tissot

6. The bodies of the crucified were usually allowed to remain on the cross until they collapsed from decay or were picked apart by scavengers. Thus the place of execution would be littered with the bones of those who had died before, adding to the horror of the scene. It may be that “*Golgotha*” (Place of the Skull) derived its name from the grisly practice. Scripture reports that Pilate gave permission for the burial of Christ. Roman regulations stipulated, however, that in the event that permission had been given for the burial of the crucified, the officer in charge was required to pierce the victim’s heart with his spear to guarantee that the condemned was actually dead. The Romans wanted to be absolutely certain that no one escaped their justice. To insure the meticulous observance of proper procedure in these matters, the regulation further stipulated that if one condemned to

death by crucifixion were inadvertently taken down from the cross before he was dead, the officer in charge of the execution would be condemned to take his place. The Biblical record once again precisely mirrors actual Roman procedure. ***“Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.”*** (John 19:34; cf. also I John 5:6-8)

ARCHAEOLOGY SHEDS NEW LIGHT ON THE TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF JESUS!

Within the last few decades, archaeological discoveries in Israel have significantly enhanced our understanding of the crucifixion process and our awareness of the accuracy of the Bible's account of the Lord's trial and execution. Neither of the dramatic discoveries listed here were the result of deliberate exploration. Instead, they took place by accident as modern building projects were undertaken in the area around Jerusalem.

The first physical evidence of a Roman crucifixion was uncovered near Jerusalem in 1968. An excavation crew laying the foundation for a new apartment complex at Giv'at ha Mivtar stumbled upon a cluster of burial caves. Workers found that the caves were part of a huge Jewish cemetery from the first century A.D. One of the caves contained an ossuary (a stone burial jar) which held the skeletal remains of a young man and a boy. The inscription on the jar read: "John" and "John the Son of the Hanged One." The adult was evidently the victim of crucifixion. At the time of his death he was between 24 and 28 years old, about 5 1/2 feet tall, and of slender build. His right and left heel bones were fastened together by a 5 1/2 inch iron nail. Fragments of acacia wood were found under the head of the nail and the nail's point was bent around the remains of a knot of olive wood. The bones of the victim's lower legs had been crushed after death. Scholars speculate that when the body was taken down from the cross they were unable to remove the nail holding the feet because it had bent into the knot. The feet were then severed and torn from the cross along with a chunk of wood. Scratches on the arm bones of the victim indicated that nails had been driven between the base of the radius and the ulna at the wrist. The angle of a fracture in the left calf further indicated that his knees had been folded together on one side. These remains have forced a revision of the traditional picture of the crucifixion. It would seem that the victim's feet were placed parallel to one another with both knees sharply bent in one direction. A small board was then placed over the victim's feet to prevent them from tearing loose as he hung upon the cross. The spike was driven through the wood, both heel bones, and on into the cross itself. The spine was sharply twisted at the waist to enable the upper body to be nailed to the patibulum through the wrists. A small wooden hook or seat ("sedile") was mounted on the cross upon which one of the victim's buttocks rested to carry part of the body's weight, and thus prolong the painful dying. This physical evidence serves to corroborate the Biblical text's description in every detail.

Only five or six of the hundreds of characters who walk through the pages of the New Testament have ever been attested in archaeological finds. A startling discovery took place in November of 1990 which added a most significant name to that select list. As a construction crew began excavations for a water park just south of Jerusalem's old city the diggers accidentally uncovered a first century burial cave. Archaeologists were quickly summoned and entered the cave to find six ossuaries. These carved stone boxes were used for the secondary burial of wealthy Jews during the first century. At the time of death, the body was anointed with spices and wrapped in a linen shroud. Much later, after the flesh had decomposed, the bones were collected and placed in an ossuary. If the deceased was particularly wealthy or important the ossuary was often decorated and inscribed. In this instance, five of the six ossuaries bore inscriptions and carved decorations. The most intricately carved of the limestone boxes bore the familiar name of Joseph ben Caiaphas. Caiaphas, as any New Testament reader knows, was the High Priest of Israel who conspired to have Jesus arrested, conducted his trial and condemned the Savior to die for the crime of blasphemy. Inside the ossuary were the remains of a sixty year old man who had been buried with all of the pomp and dignity due the nation's High Priest. The brittle bones of the leader who had prophesied "that it would be better that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish" (John 11:50) had now been uncovered to affirm the Word of the Messiah whom he had once denied and attempted to destroy. Once again, the dry dust of ancient history stirs to testify to the absolute reliability of the Word of God.

CHRIST'S STATE OF EXALTATION



“Therefore God Has Exalted Him to the Highest Place”

by Rudolf Schäfer

Philippians 2: 9-11

“Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

After His death and burial, our Lord fully re-assumed the glory and power that were rightfully His as the Son of God (State of Exaltation). Thus the God/Man, Jesus Christ now and forever makes full use of His divine majesty and power, being present

everywhere and upholding and governing all things. The Apostles Creed summarizes the State of Exaltation in this way: *“He descended into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.”*

“HE DESCENDED INTO HELL”

“For Christ died for sins, once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.” (I Peter 3: 18-20; cf. also Colossians 2:13-15; Ephesians 4:8-10)

Christ’s descent into Hell was that act by which the God/man, Christ glorified, after His quickening in the tomb on the third day, appeared in the prison of the damned as a herald of their judgement and His victory. Christ has conquered Hell for us. He descended into Hell to proclaim His victory, that any lingering doubts we might have about the totality of that victory over the devil and his kingdom might be dispelled forever. Christ descended into Hell, triumphed over Satan and his hosts, took captivity captive, and like a triumphant general made a public show of the spoils of war and the vanquished enemies.



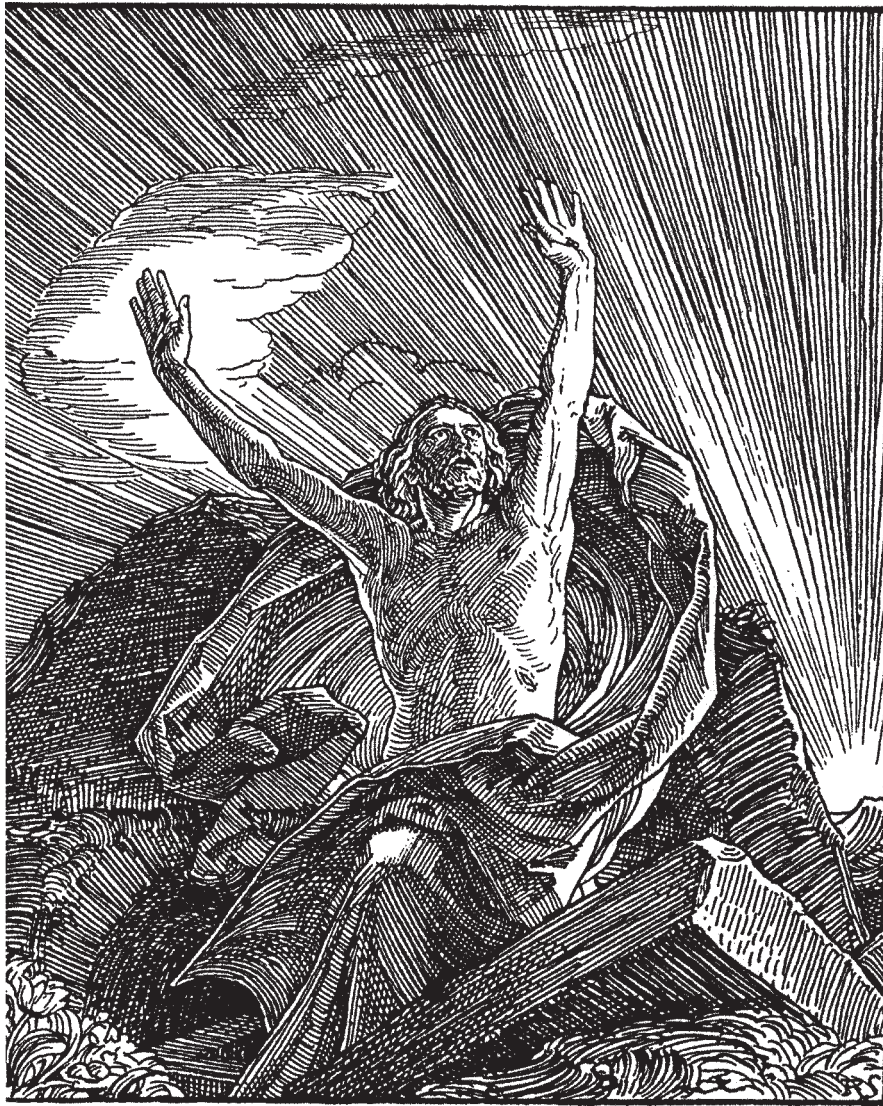
“The Descent Into Hell”-13th Century Stone Relief

“We simply believe that after the burial the entire person, God and man, descended into hell, conquered the devil, destroyed hell’s power, and took from the devil all his might. We are not to concern ourselves with exalted and acute speculation about how this occurred. With our reason and five senses this article cannot be comprehended any more than the preceding one, how Christ has been made to sit at the right hand and almighty power and majesty of God. We must only believe and cling to the Word. Then we shall retain the heart of this article and derive from it the comfort that neither hell nor the devil can take us or any believer in Christ captive or harm us.” (The Formula of Concord, SD IX, 1577)

“This was a proclamation of Jesus as Lord, that is, a proclamation of victory. Though the proclamation of this victory is centered in the moment of the appearance of the resurrected Christ to the disobedient, the essential theme of the conflict between God and Satan can be traced throughout both the Old and New Testaments...The descent into Hell is the proclamation of victory in Hell, just as the resurrection is the declaration of that victory on earth.” (David Scaer, Christology)



“Christ’s Descent Into Hell” by Sasha Schneider



“Christ Is Risen!” By Rudolf Schäfer

“THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD”

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all, He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born...If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (I Corinthians 15:3-8,17-20)

THE PHYSICAL RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST KEYSTONE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION PROVES:



“Easter Morning” by Rudolf Schäfer

1. That He is what He claimed
to be, the Son of God!

*“He was declared with power to
be the Son of God by his
resurrection from the dead.”*

(Romans 1:4)

2. That God the Father
accepted the sacrifice of His
Son as the Redeemer of the
world!

*“He was delivered over to death
for our sins and was raised to life
for our justification.”* (Romans

4:25)

3. That He will raise us from
the dead to life
everlasting with Him!

*“I am the resurrection and the
life. He who believes in Me will
live even though he dies.”* (John

11:25)



“The Ascension of Jesus” by Heinrich Hoffmann

***“HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN AND SITTETH ON THE
RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY”***

*“After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was taken up into heaven
and sat at the right hand of God.” (Mark 16:19)*

*“That power is like the working of His mighty strength which He exerted in
Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand
in the heavenly realms far above all rule and authority, power and dominion,
and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the
one to come. And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to
be Head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of
Him who fills everything in every way.” (Ephesians 1:19-23)*

Christ has returned bodily to the glory of His Father to prepare a place for us in heaven (John 14:2-3). When Scripture tells us that God has “*seated Him at His right hand*” (Ephesians 1:20), it offers us the assurance that Christ, the exalted God/man, now fully exercises His divine power and authority over all the universe. Christ carries out that responsibility as he (1) sends His people out into the world to proclaim the Good News of salvation to everyone by the power of the Holy Spirit (PROPHET); (2) intercedes for us before the throne of the heavenly Father (PRIEST); and, (3) rules and protects His church and governs over all the world for the benefit of His people (KING).



“The Ascension” by Eduard Gebhardt

“FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD”

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.” Matthew 25:31-32

“God has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the man that He has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead.” Acts 17:31

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.” Revelation 22:20

Christ will come again with glory and with power to judge the living and the dead (Matthew 25:31,32). The day of the Lord’s return is known only to God (Mark 13:32). On that great and terrible day, the justice and righteousness of God will be demonstrated before all of humanity, assembled before the Judgement Seat of Christ. Scripture urges us to be ready at all times for His coming (Matthew 24:44).



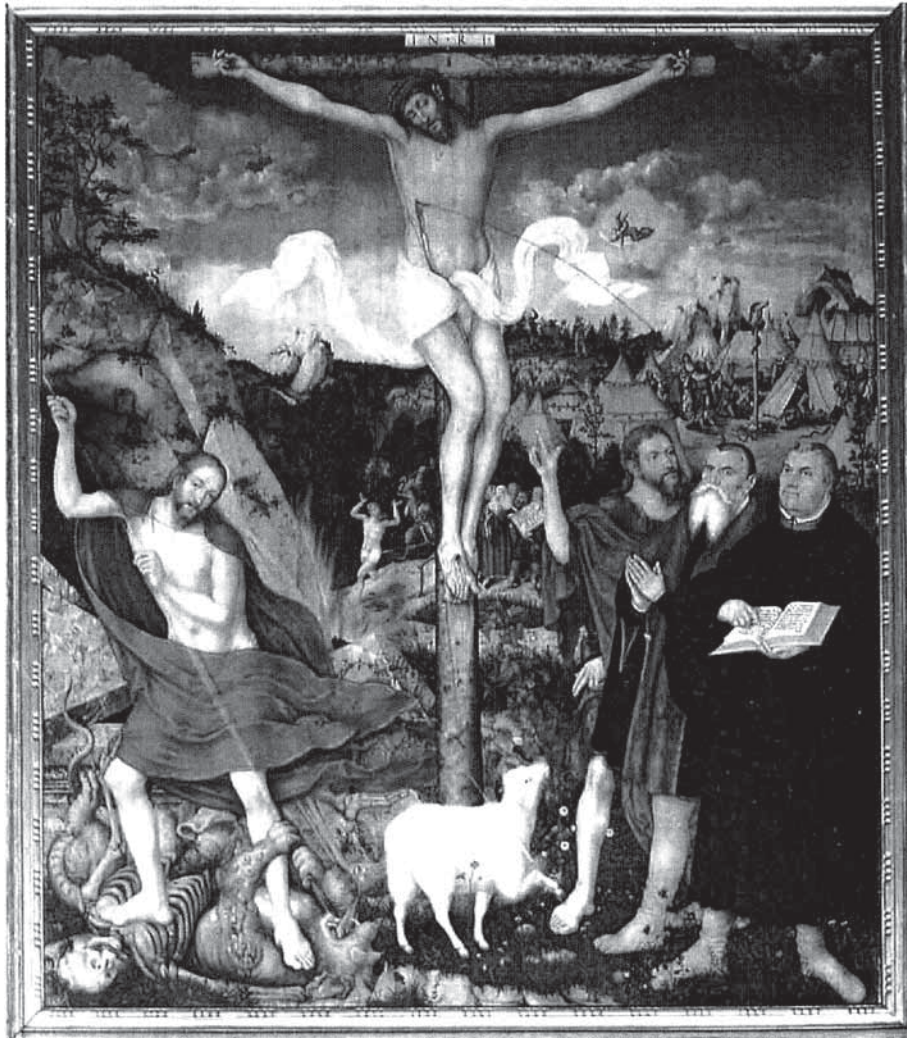
“The Last Judgment” by Michael Wohlgemut - 1493



“The Final Judgment” by C.G. Pfannschmidt

UNIT VI

God's Plan of Salvation



*“Christ the Redeemer of the World” by Lucas Cranach
From the Altar Triptych of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sts.
Peter and Paul in Weimar - 1555*

God has acted to resolve the deadly dilemma of man's sin. God has taken the initiative to do what humanity could not do for itself. He Himself has done what had to be done to win forgiveness, life, and salvation for fallen mankind. The holy and righteous God could not allow sin to go unpunished. The price had to be paid. And so God paid that awful price Himself. ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son,***

that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) Our wonderful God loves us with a love we could never have earned for ourselves. The Bible calls the undeserved love of God that is ours in Christ Jesus -

GRACE!

Scripture affirms with unmistakable clarity that our salvation is totally by grace, the result of what God has done for us in Jesus, His Son. We do not contribute to that salvation in any way whatsoever.

“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.”
(Ephesians 2:8-9)

“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe...A man is justified by faith, apart from observing the Law.”
(Romans 3:22,28)

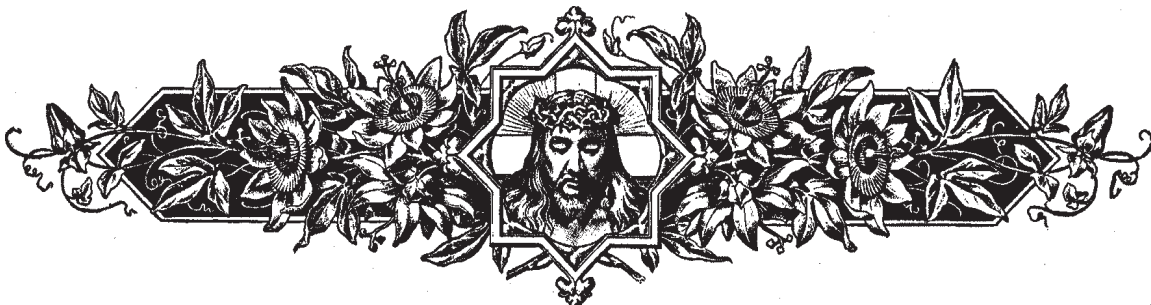
“He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy.” (Titus 3:5)

“God credits righteousness apart from works.” (Romans 4:6)

“You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.” (Galatians 5:4)

“If by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.” (Romans 11:6)

“God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them...God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (II Corinthians 5:19,21)



The Vocabulary of Salvation

The Bible uses a rich variety of language to describe the saving work of Jesus Christ. Each of these compatible interpretations emphasizes a different aspect of that work and serves to enhance our understanding of what God has done for our salvation.

1. Redemption

The term “*redemption*” is derived from a Latin root meaning “*to buy back*”, thus meaning the liberation of any possession, object, or person by payment of a ransom. In Greek the root word means “*to loose*” and so “*to set free*”. The term is used of freeing from chains, slavery, or prison. The Bible uses the concept to teach that Jesus Christ has paid a complete, substitutionary, ransom price, namely the shedding of His blood to set the captive free from slavery to sin and death. By the gracious payment of that ransom price in the blood of Jesus we are restored to the harmony with God



for which mankind was created in the beginning. Martin Luther declares the wonder of this divine action on our behalf in his magnificent explanation of the Second Article of the Creed:

“He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him and His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness. Just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.” (Small Catechism)

Biblical texts which describe our salvation as redemption, a ransom paid to set us free from sin and death, include the following:

“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28; cf. also Mark 10:45)

“Be shepherds of the church of God which He bought with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28)

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3:24)

“For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord’s freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ’s slave. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.” (1 Corinthians 7:22-23)

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’” (Galatians 3:13)

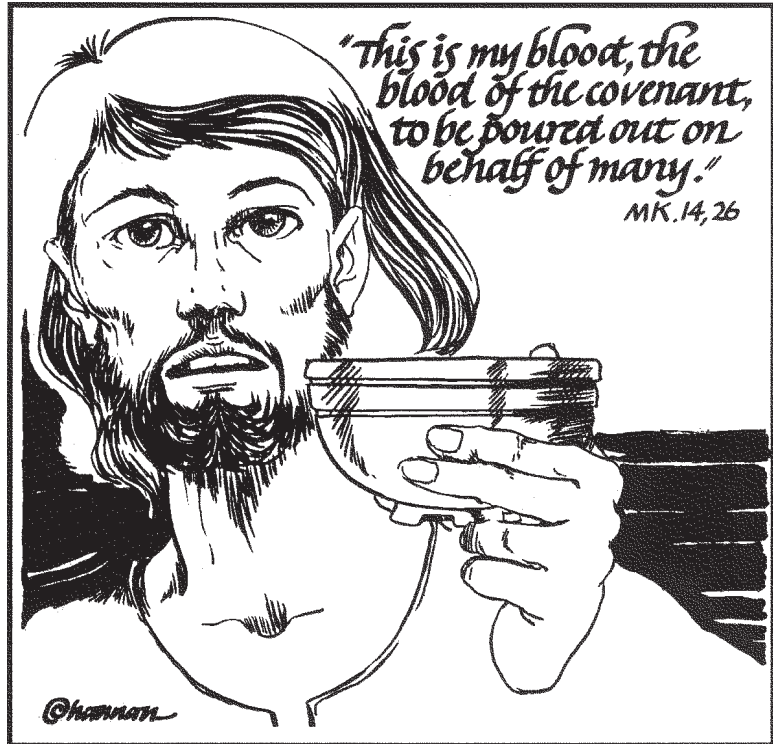
“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.” (Ephesians 1:7)

“When Christ came as the high priest of the good things that are already here, He went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the most holy place once for all by means of His own blood having obtained eternal redemption...For this reason, Christ is the Mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance - now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.” (Hebrews 9:12,15)

“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as gold or silver that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a Lamb without blemish or defect.” (1 Peter 1:18-19)

2. New Covenant

A “covenant” is an arrangement between two parties involving mutual obligations. In the cultures of the ancient Near East such covenant agreements were characteristically sealed in the blood of a sacrificial animal. Thus the Old Testament Hebrew idiom for establishing a covenant literally means - “to cut a covenant” (cf Genesis 15:9f.; Jeremiah 34:18). The covenant concept is the predominant description of the arrangement which established the relationship between God and His people in the



Old Testament. That gracious covenant was initiated by God first with Israel and then with the church. Through the covenant which He established, God conveyed to humanity the meaning of human life and the promise of salvation. That promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The language of the covenant carries over into the New Testament which refers to what God’s love has accomplished in Christ for the salvation of humankind as the “**New Covenant**”. In this way, Scripture clearly indicates that the promises which God entrusted to Israel find their perfect fulfillment in the salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ.

“So the Lord said to him, ‘Bring Me a heifer, a goat, and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and young pigeon. Abram brought all these to Him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other...When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking fire pot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram.” (Genesis 15:9-10, 17-18)

“I Am God Almighty. Walk before Me and be blameless. I will confirm My covenant between you and Me and will greatly increase your numbers.” (Genesis 17:1-2)

“The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke My covenant, though I was a husband to them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be My people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31-34; cf. Hebrews 8:8-12)

“In the same way, after supper, He took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’” (I Corinthians 11:25)

“He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant - not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills us the spirit gives life.” (II Corinthians 3:6)

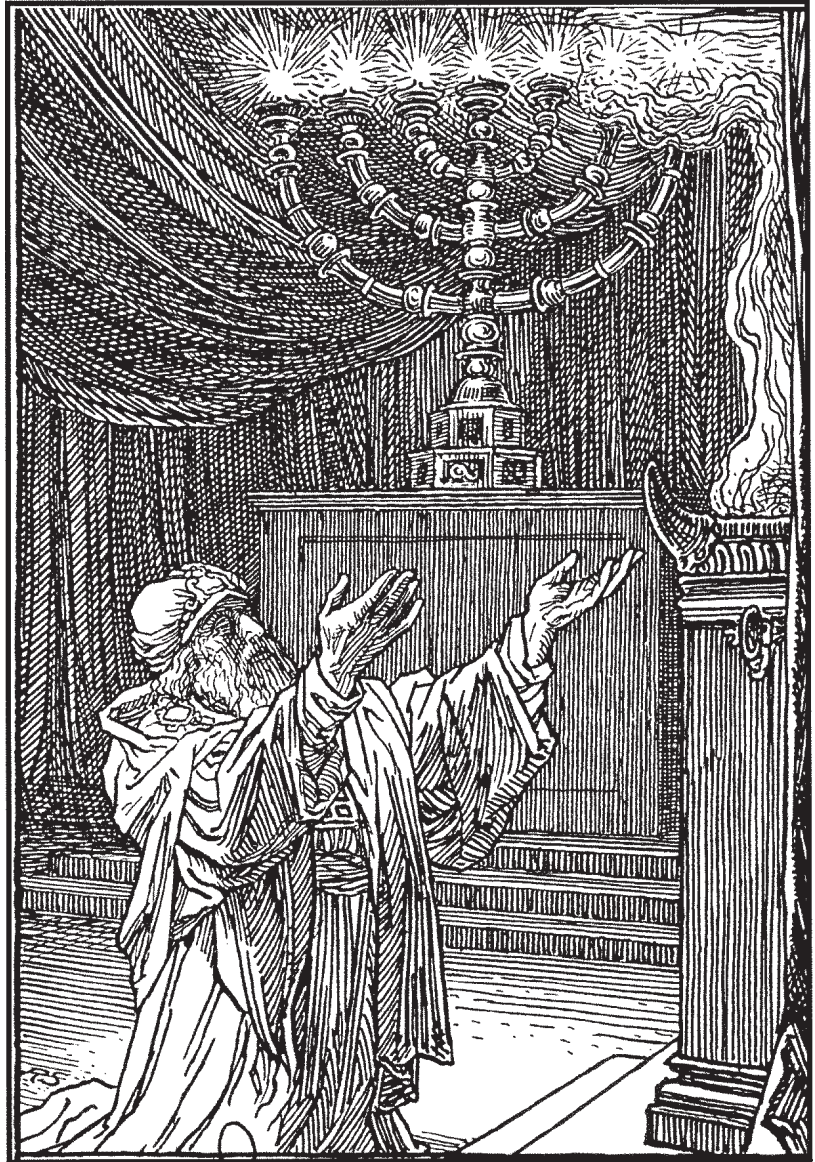
“By calling this covenant ‘new’, He has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.” (Hebrews 8:13)

“For this reason Christ is the Mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised inheritance - now that He had died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.” (Hebrews 9:15)

“You have come to God, the Judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:23,24)

3. Propitiation

“Propitiation” means the turning away of anger by the offering of a gift. Our loving God cannot be indifferent to sin and its disastrous consequences in the lives of His people. Sin provokes the anger of God and His wrath descends upon those who choose to live in sin. Unlike human anger which is often simply an irrational lack of self-control, the anger of God is the stern opposition of His holy nature to all that is evil. (cf. Psalm 11:5-7; Romans 1:18) Forgiveness necessarily involves the laying aside of God’s anger. The sacrificial system of the Old Testament was intended by God to teach His people that the only means of averting His wrath against sin was the blood of the atonement (Leviticus 17:11). The Levitical sacrifices did not, in and of themselves themselves, merit the remission of sins or placate God’s anger. Instead they were designed by God to point forward to the one great sacrifice of ***“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”*** (John 1:29; cf. Hebrews 10:3-4,14) David Chytraeus, one of the great theologians of 17th century Lutheranism said it well when he wrote: *“Each and every sacrifice was a sermon on the sacrifice and blessings of Christ.”* The gift that secures propitiation was provided by God Himself in the person of His Son. The blood of the atonement was the precious blood of Jesus poured out for us upon the cross.



*“The High Priest Before the Altar in the Tabernacle”
by Rudolf Schäfer*

“God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in His blood.”
(Romans 3:25)

“Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the place of atonement...He (Christ) did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves, but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption...So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people.”
(Hebrews 9:5,12,28)

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” I John 4:10

“For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people.” (Hebrews 2:17)

“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have One who speaks to the Father in our defense - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” (I John 2:1,2)



“The Offering of the Scapegoat” by Rudolf Schäfer

4. Reconciliation - Atonement

Reconciliation (Latin - *“to bring together again”*) and Atonement (Anglo-Saxon *“to overcome separation”* - literally *“at - one - ment”*) are two very similar terms which both refer to the restoration of friendly relationships and of peace where before there had been alienation and hostility. Both terms imply the removal of the offense which caused the disruption of peace and harmony. In Scripture they refer to God’s action in removing the barrier of sin which separated Him from fallen mankind by the sacrifice of His Son. The innocent Christ takes the place of guilty mankind and offers His death as our substitute (Vicarious Atonement). Luther describes what he aptly calls the *“joyful exchange”* in this way: *“Christ is full of grace, life, and salvation. The soul is full of sins, death, and damnation. Now let faith come between them and sins, death and damnation will be Christ’s, while grace, life, and salvation will be the soul’s.”* (M. Luther, The Freedom of a Christian, 1520) Reconciliation is, first of all, a change in the heart of God toward man because of Christ’s interposing sacrifice. As a result of the *“joyful exchange”* of Christ’s righteousness for our sinfulness, God now regards us as though we had never sinned. This reconciliation is an objective reality, wholly independent of humanity’s mood or attitude. The blessings of this reconciliation are received subjectively by each individual through faith, which is, of course, also a gift of God.



“God Was In Christ Reconciling the World to Himself” by Rudolf Schäfer

“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.” (Leviticus 17:11)

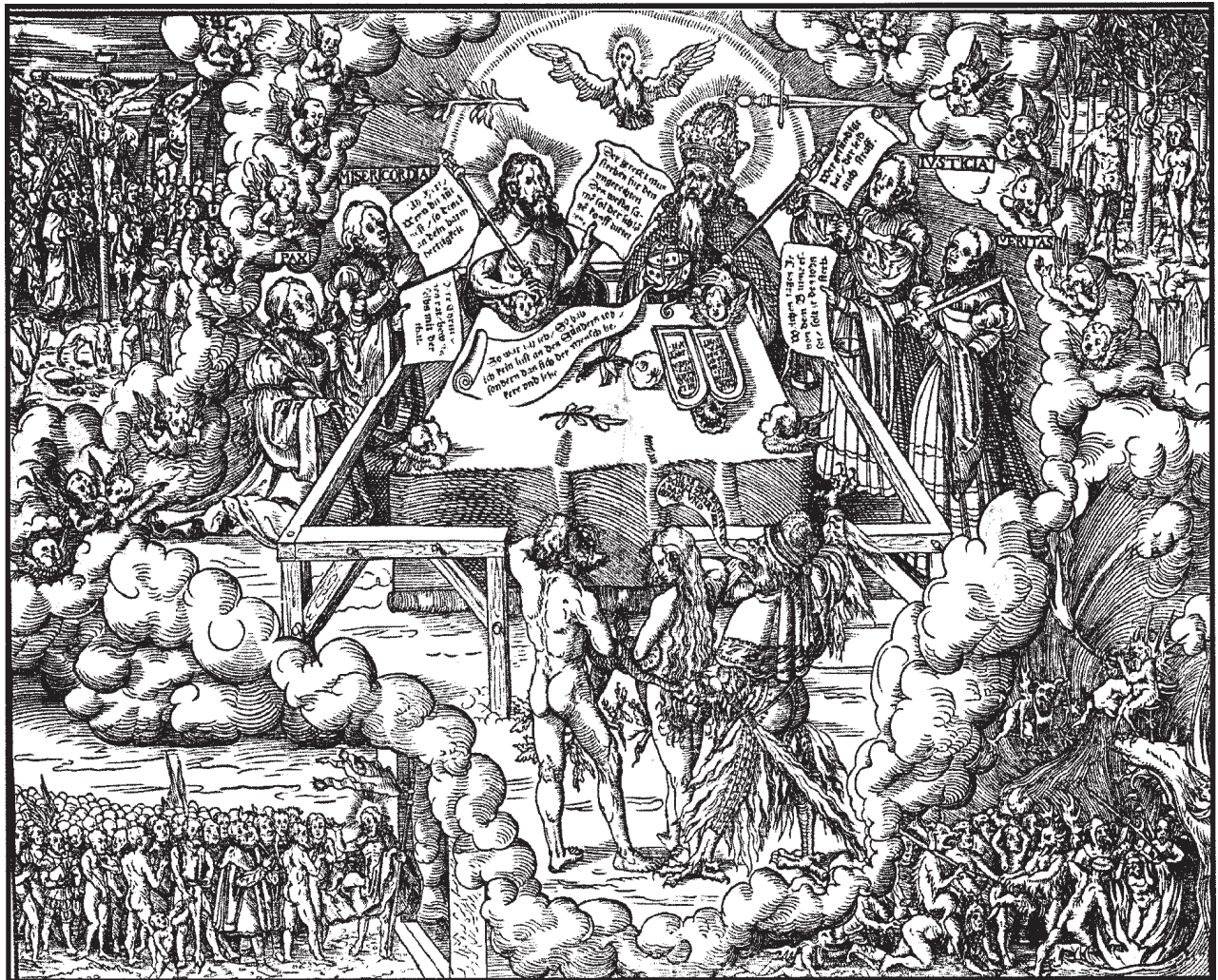
“Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:4-6)

“But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through Him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” (Romans 5:8-11)

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation...We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (II Corinthians 5:18-21)

“But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which He put to death their hostility.” (Ephesians 2:13-16)

“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” (I Peter 3:18)



"The Justification of Adam and Eve" by Jacob Lucius - 1556

5. Justification

Justification is the declarative act of God by which He establishes persons as righteous, that is in right and true relationship to Himself. In Greek, justification is a forensic term - that is, it applies to the law court and the act of acquitting or vindicating someone. To be justified, in a Biblical sense, means to be declared *"not guilty"*. It has to do with the innocence of a person. Justification in Scripture is a verdict not a process or quality in man. God's declaration of man as innocent is just and fair because of the atoning death of Christ on the cross where full payment for sin was exacted in blood. Therefore the justification of the sinner is completely by grace, not on the basis of anything man has done but only because of what God in Christ has done for man. All this is entirely apart from the Law and human effort. The Bible firmly condemns every attempt to combine self-righteousness with the righteousness of God as futile and damnable. The righteousness of God is appropriated to the individual by faith alone. Man cannot produce

his own faith, neither in whole or in part, but through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament (Means of Grace) God confers faith through the working of the Holy Spirit.

“Therefore no one will be declared righteous in His sight by observing the law; rather through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood...so as to be just and justify the man who had faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3:20-26)

“What does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness’...The words ‘it was credited to him’ were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness - to us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 4:3,23-5:1)

“Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all man. For just as through the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one Man, the many will be made righteous.” (Romans 5:18-19)

“So we too have put our faith in Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law, no one will be justified...I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing.” (Galatians 2:16-17,20-21)

“The article of justification, which is our only protection, not only against all the powers and plottings of men but also against the gates of Hell, is this: by faith alone in Christ, without works, are we declared righteous and saved...The article of justification is the

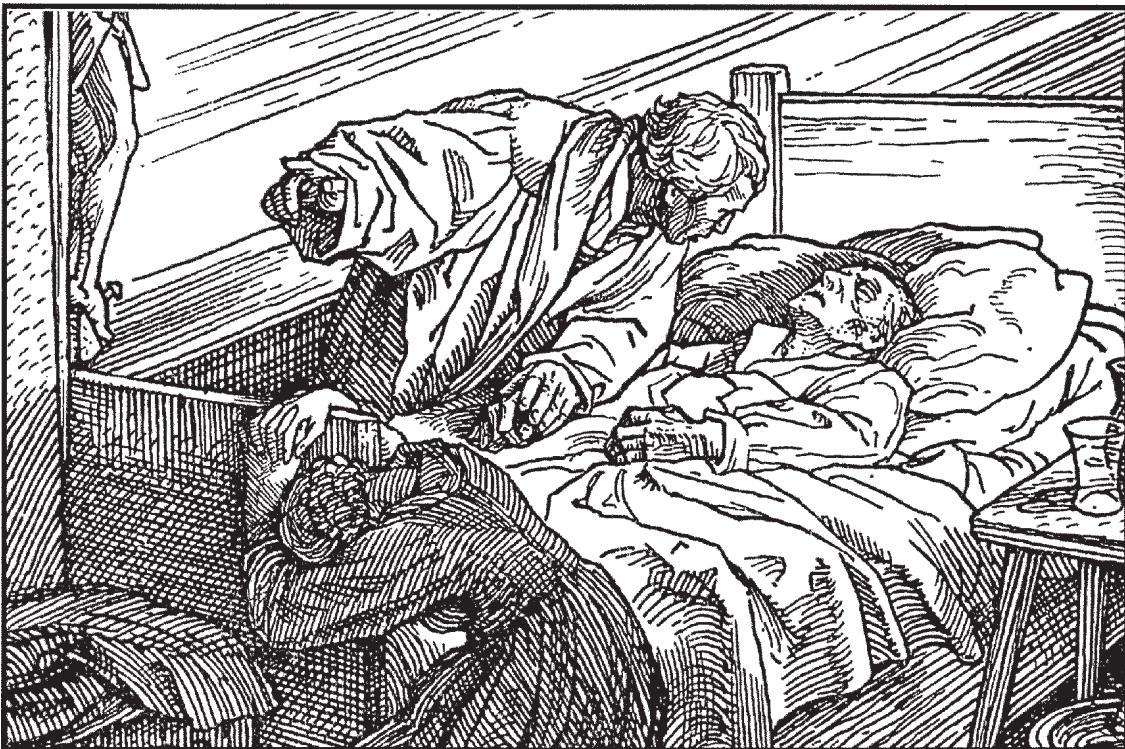


“Sola Gratia” by Rudolf Schäfer

master and prince, the lord, the ruler, and the judge over all kinds of doctrines; it preserves and governs all church doctrine and raises up our conscience before God. Without this article the world is utter death and darkness. No error is so mean, so clumsy, and so outworn, as not to be supremely pleasing to human reason and to seduce us if we are without the knowledge and contemplation of this article...This doctrine is the head and the cornerstone. It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and defends the church of God; and without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour...In short, if this article concerning Christ - the doctrine that we are justified and saved through Him alone and consider all apart from Him damned - is not professed, all

resistance and restraint are at an end. Then there is, in fact, neither measure or limit to any heresy or error...Whoever departs from the article of justification does not know God and is an idolater.” (Dr. Martin Luther from What Luther Says , Vol. II. Ewald Plass, Translator and Editor. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1959.)

“Concerning the righteousness of faith before God we believe, teach, and confess unanimously, in accord with the summary formulation of our Christian faith and confession described above, that a poor sinner is justified before God (that is, he is absolved and declared utterly free from all his sins, and from the verdict of well deserved damnation, and is adopted as a child of God and as an heir of eternal life) without any merit or worthiness on our part, and without any preceding, present, or subsequent works, by sheer grace, solely through the merit of the total obedience, the bitter passion, the death, and the resurrection of Christ, our Lord, whose obedience is reckoned to us as righteousness. The Holy Spirit offers these treasures to us in the promise of the Gospel, and faith is the only means whereby we can apprehend, accept, apply them to ourselves, and make them our own. Faith is a gift of God whereby we rightly learn to know Christ as our Redeemer in the Word of the gospel and to trust in Him, that solely for the sake of His obedience we have the forgiveness of sins by grace and are accounted righteous and holy by God the Father and are saved forever...Accordingly the word ‘justify’ means to declare righteous and free from sins and from the eternal punishment of these sins on account of the righteousness of Christ which God reckons to faith.” (Formula of Concord, SD, VI, 1577)



“In the Hour of Death - Look to the Cross of Christ Alone” by Rudolf Schäfer

UNIT VII

Conversion and Sanctification

The Work of the Holy Spirit



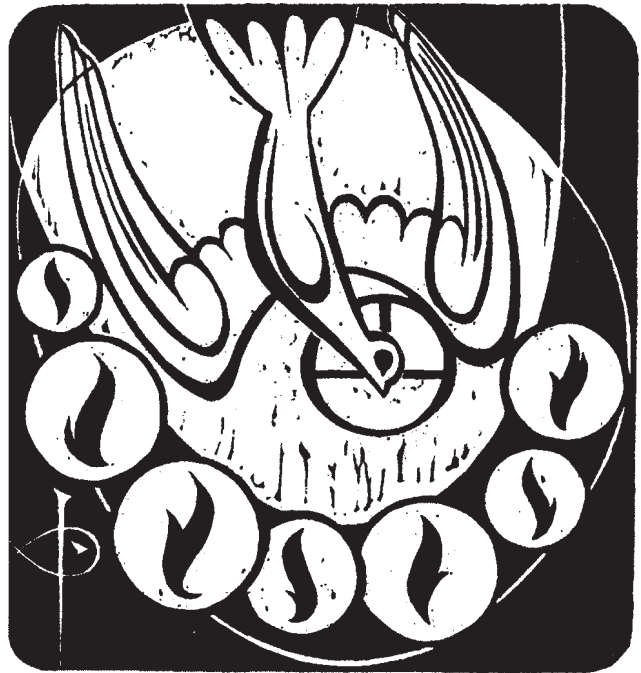
“The Day of Pentecost” 19th Century Bible Engraving

“I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him. But the Holy Ghost has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead; and He will give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.” (M. Luther, The Small Catechism, 1529)

The Natural Condition of Man

No human being can by his own reason or strength decide to believe in Jesus Christ. ***“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*** (I Corinthians 2:14) Natural man is, even at his best, spiritually blind, dead, and hostile to the things of God for his salvation. (cf. II Corinthians 4:1-4; Ephesians 2:1-5; Romans 5:6-10) There is no dormant spiritual strength or energy that might be roused to produce the spark of faith. By himself, man is spiritually helpless and hopeless.

Nonetheless, just as it is not natural for men to admit that they are sinners who deserve eternal punishment from God so it is not natural for them to believe that they can be saved only by what Christ has done for them. The Lutheran Confessions call this deadly delusion *“the opinion of the Law”*, an instinctive inclination to spurn the grace of God and depend upon man’s own efforts instead. (cf. Apology to the Augsburg Confession, IV, 146) It is this attitude of work righteousness that is really at the heart of man’s enmity against God. Scripture firmly rejects *“synergism”* (that is, man working in co-operation with God for his own salvation) in every form. By nature, sinful man is incapable of accepting Jesus. ***“No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit.”*** (I Corinthians 12:3; cf. also Genesis 8:21; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 7:14,18,22-23; 8:7; Galatians 5:17).



“Free will by its own natural powers can do nothing for man’s conversion, righteousness, peace, and salvation, cannot co-operate, and cannot obey, believe, and give assent when the Holy Spirit offers the grace of God and salvation through the Gospel. On the contrary, because of the wicked and obstinate disposition with which he was born, he defiantly resists God and His will unless the Holy Spirit illuminates and rules him. For this reason

the Holy Scriptures compare the hearts of unregenerated man to a hard stone (Ezekial 26:26; Jeremiah 5:3), which resists rather than yields in any way to human touch, or to an unhewn timber (Hosea 6:5), or to a wild, unbroken animal (Psalm 73:22).” (Formula of Concord, SD,II,18-19)

Faith is a free gift of God. Man comes to faith through the work of God the Holy Ghost.

“Holy Scriptures ascribe conversion, faith in Christ, regeneration, renewal, and everything that belongs to its real beginning and completion in no way to the human powers of the natural free will, be it entirely, or one half, or the least and tiniest part, but altogether and alone to the divine operation and of the Holy Spirit.” (Formula of Concord, SD,II, 25)



Conversion - The Work of the Holy Spirit

The Bible contains many different terms which describe that work of the Holy Spirit by which He changes the spiritually blind, dead, and resisting unbeliever into a believing child of God. Once again, the variety of terminology serves to highlight different dimensions of what God does to bring men to faith and enriches our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit.

1. Conversion - God's action in turning the sinner away from sin and unbelief to faith and new life in Christ. ***"You were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."*** (I Peter 2:25; cf. also Psalm 51:13; Jeremiah 31:18; Acts 3:19; 11:21; 15:3)



"Jesus and Nicodemus" by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

2. Regeneration - God's action in causing the unbeliever to be ***"born again"*** to faith and new life in Christ. ***"You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring Word of God."*** (I Peter 1:23; cf. also John 3:3-6; Titus 3:5) NOTE: Every believer in Jesus Christ is ***"born again"***. Contrary to the notion widespread among Pentecostals today, to be ***"born again"*** means to come to faith and does not refer to some later spiritual experience which separates Christians into two different categories.

3. Quickening - God's action in making a believer out of an unbeliever raises him from death to life. ***"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ."*** (Colossians 2:13; cf. also Ephesians 2:4,5; I John 3:14)

4. Enlightenment - God's action in removing the spiritual blindness of natural man by bringing him to faith in Christ Jesus. *"I am sending you to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive the forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."* (Acts 26:18; cf. also Isaiah 9:2; John 1:14; 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:6; I Peter 2:9)

The Holy Ghost Works Through the Means of Grace

The Bible teaches that the Holy Ghost uses the means which God has established to create faith in the hearts

of men. Instead of working immediately and directly, which would leave us dependent on purely subjective experience, God has chosen to convey the blessings of the redemption which Christ has won for us through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. We call these channels which convey God's undeserved love to us the *"Means of Grace."*



"The Means of Grace in the Lutheran Church"
by J.C. H. Koopmann

"Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth." (John 17:17)

"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ." (Romans 10:17)

"You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring Word of God." (I Peter 1:23)

“He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” (Titus 3:5)

“He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” (Matthew 26:27-28)

“Through the Word and the Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel.” (Augsburg Confession, V, 1530)

“God does not wish to deal with us otherwise than through His spoken Word and the Sacraments.” (Smalkald Articles, VIII, 10, 1536)



“Martin Luther Preaching Christ Crucified” by Lucas Cranach

FAITH

Knowledge

To Know the True God As Revealed In His Word

Faith comes through hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:17)

Acceptance

To Accept the Bible as the Word of God

*“You accepted it not as the word of men but as it actually is, the Word of God.”
(I Thessalonians 2:13)*

Trust

To Trust in God with the Firm Confidence that all of His Promises Will Be Fulfilled For Me

*“I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day.”
(2 Timothy 1:12)*

“We believe, teach, and confess, that faith is not a mere knowledge of the stories about Christ, but the kind of gift of God by which, in the Word of the Gospel, we recognize Christ aright as our Redeemer and trust in Him, so that solely because of His obedience, by grace, we have forgiveness of sins, are regarded as holy and righteous by God the Father, and shall be saved eternally.” (Formula of Concord, Epitome, III, 4, 1577)



“The Day of Pentecost” by Rudolf Schäfer

SANCTIFICATION

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The term “*sanctification*” (Latin - “*to make holy*”) refers to the spiritual growth of the believer which follows upon justification. This process of renewal is the work of God the Holy Spirit through which the Christian is restored, step by step, in the image of God, righteousness of life, and holiness of conduct. While justification takes place outside of man as God declares him to be righteous for Christ’s sake, sanctification is divine action within man, Christ in us, as by faith we become participants in the death and resurrection of our Lord. Christ’s action in me (Sanctification) is the necessary result of Christ’s action for me (Justification). The two are inseparably connected to one another.

“Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God,

as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to do this more and more...It is God's will that you should be holy...For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you His Holy Spirit.” (I Thessalonians 4: 1,3,7-8)

“May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful and He will do it.” (I Thessalonians 5: 23-24)

“For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10)

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” (Galatians 6: 7-10)

“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such a faith save him?...In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action is dead...Show me your faith without deeds and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that and shudder...As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” (James 2: 14, 17-19, 26)

“Our churches teach that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruits and that it is necessary to do the good works commanded by God. We must do so because it is God's will and not because we rely on such works to merit justification before God, for forgiveness of sins and justification are apprehended by faith, as Christ Himself also testifies, ‘When you have done all these things say, ‘We are unworthy servants’ (Luke 17:10).” (Augsburg Confession, VI)



“Striving Toward the Heavenly Goal” by Rudolf Schüfer

The Causes of Sanctification

The God who creates faith also produces sanctification by His infinite power. ***“For it is God who works in you both to will and to act according to His good purpose.”*** (Philippians 2:13) (cf. also I Thessalonians 5:23-24; Ephesians 2:10) God must make the unwilling willing. He must give the strength and power to conquer sin. When a Christian fights against temptation, when with his heart he confesses his sin with sorrow, when he rejoices in Jesus Christ and in gratitude to his Savior wishes to glorify the Savior’s name, when the Christian is moved to help his neighbor, to be forgiving - it is God who works these things in him. The Holy Spirit, promised to believers as a precious gift by the Savior, teaches them and brings to their remembrance the words of Christ (John 14:26); guides them into all truth and glorifies Christ (John 16:13,14); and, fills

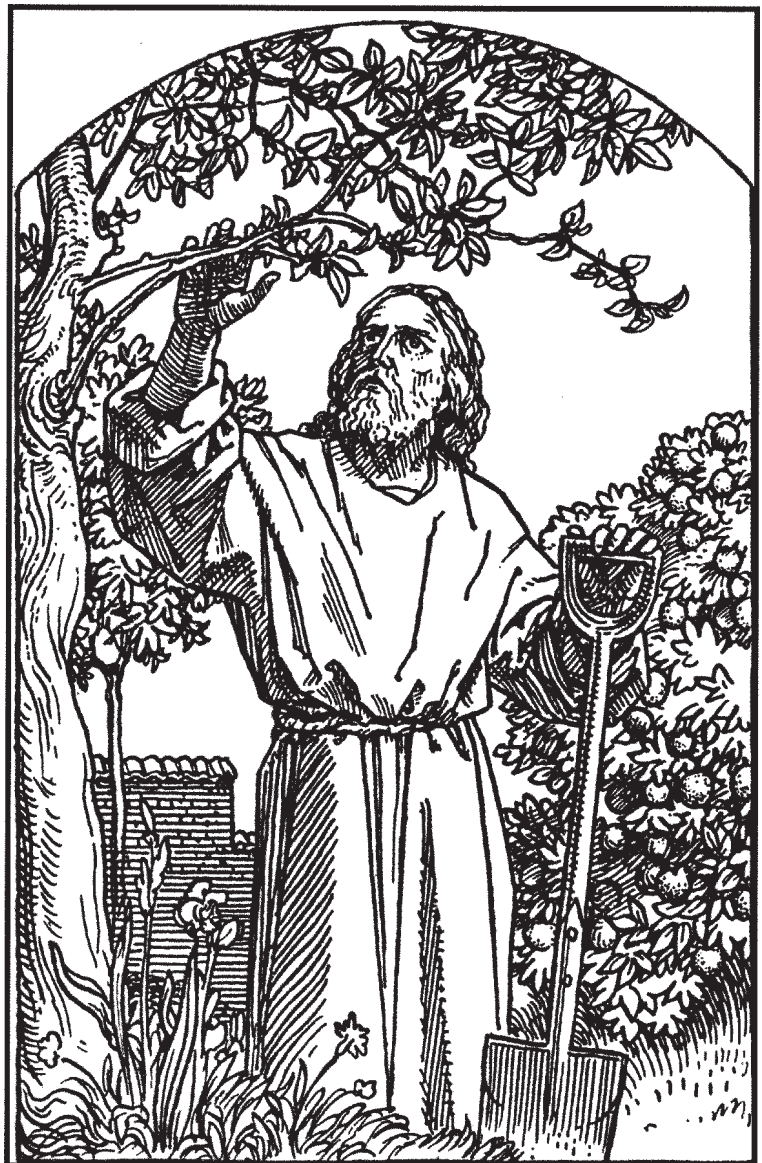
them with His gifts (I Corinthians 12:7-11). As the Spirit of prayer (Zechariah 12:10) He teaches believers to pray (Romans 8:15,26). As the Spirit of adoption He strengthens their confidence that they are children of God (Romans 8:16). As the Spirit, not of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7) He strengthens them in their daily battle against their flesh (Galatians 5:16-18, 22) and works in them righteousness, peace, and joy (Romans 14:17). As the Spirit of the God of hope (Romans 15:13) he enables them to abound in hope through His power (Romans 15:13).

But in this work of sanctification the Christian also plays a part. In conversion, man experiences the working of God in a completely passive way. In sanctification God calls the believer to play an active role, using the gifts and abilities conferred upon him by the Holy Spirit. Thus Scripture urges God's people to "grow in grace" making the best possible use of the gifts which He has given.

"As God's fellow workers, we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain." (2 Corinthians 6:1)

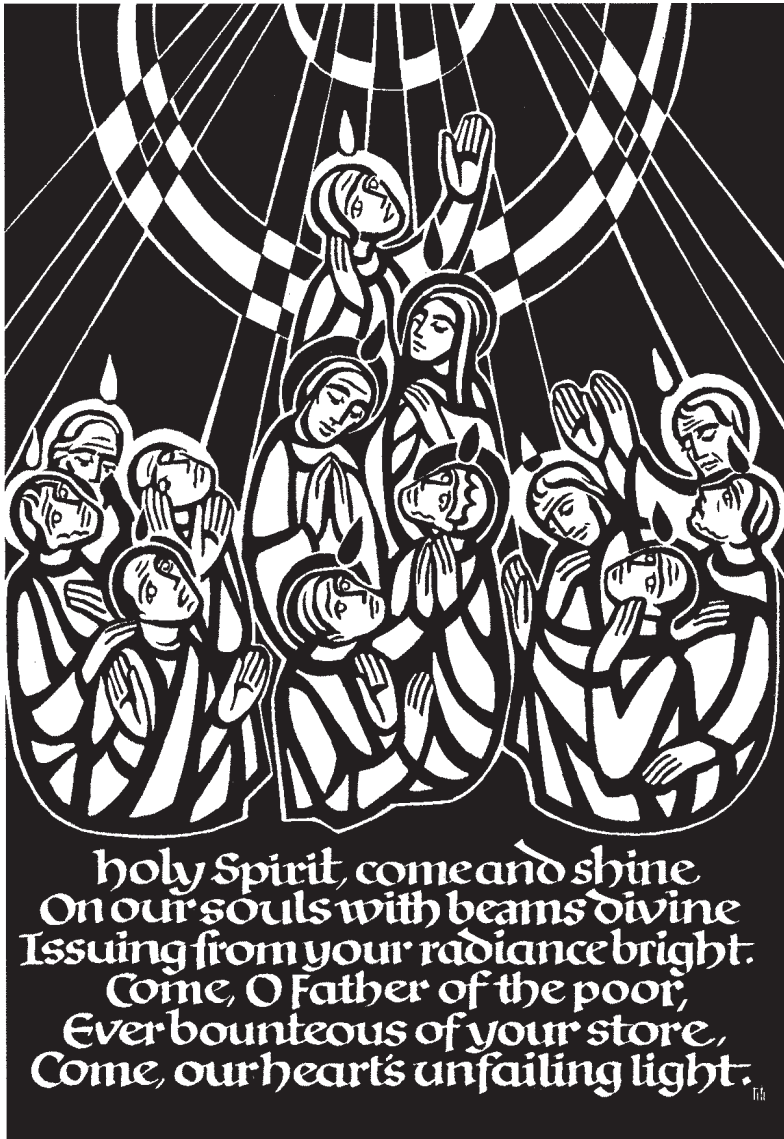
"Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." (2 Corinthians 7:1)

"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed - not only in my presence, not now much more in my absence - continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12)



"Fruitful Branches" by Rudolf Schäfer

“Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.” (1 Timothy 4:14)



“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18)

“From this it follows that as soon as the Holy Spirit has initiated His work of regeneration and renewal in us through the Word and the holy sacraments, it is certain that we can and must co-operate by the power of the Holy Spirit, even though we still do so in great weakness. Such co-operation does not proceed from our carnal and natural powers, but from the new powers and gifts which the Holy Spirit has begun in us in conversion, as St. Paul expressly and earnestly reminds us, ‘Working together with Him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain.’ (1 Corinthians 6:1) This is to be understood in no other way

than that the converted man does good, as much and as long as God rules him through His Holy Spirit, guides and leads him, but if God should withdraw His gracious hand man could not remain in obedience to God for one moment. But if this were to be understood as though the converted man co-operates alongside the Holy Spirit, the way two horses draw a wagon together, such a view could by no means be conceded without detriment to the divine truth.” (Formula of Concord, SD, II, 65,66)

Saint And Sinner At The Same Time

(*“Simul Justus Et Peccator”*)

Sanctification is progressive but never perfect. The Christian is a saint, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, whose righteousness, or perfect obedience, is imputed to him by faith. But at the same time, he remains a sinner, though his sin is covered through forgiveness in Christ. The sinful nature, with which all men are conceived and born, is not done away with when a person is born again by the power of the Holy Spirit. Its guilt is forgiven, but the “*Old Adam*” remains, always attempting to drag us back into the old way of sin. The conflict between that which we have become in Christ (“*New Man*”) and that which we are by nature (“*Old Adam*”) is the daily reality of the Christian life.

“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate, I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do, this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. In my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ, our Lord!” (Romans 7:15-25)

“I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

“The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other.” (Galatians 5:17)



“David and Bathsheba” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

PRESERVATION IN THE FAITH

“He who stands firm to the end will be saved.” (Matthew 10:22)

The Bible plainly teaches that it is possible for a believer to fall away from the faith (apostasy). A persistent pattern of willful, deliberate sin will destroy a faith relationship with the Lord. The effect of impenitent sin on the spiritual life of the believer is cumulative. If sin is allowed to dominate the heart is **“hardened”** and repentance becomes all the more difficult. The further one departs from Christ the more difficult it is to return. (cf. Romans 1:18-32; Ephesians 4:17-32) The Law in Scripture sternly warns those who are complacent and self-righteous to repent lest they forfeit salvation.

“Those on the rock are those who receive the Word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.” (Luke 8:13)

“My dear children for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, how I wish I could be with you now and

change my tone, because I am perplexed about you.” (Galatians 4:19)

“You may fight the good fight of faith, holding on to a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.” (1 Timothy 1:19-20)

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction.” (Galatians 6:7)

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed - not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence - continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2:12)

“So if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall.” (1 Corinthians 10:12)



“Nathan’s Rebuke of David’s Sin” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld



“David’s Repentance” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

“It is therefore necessary to know and to teach that when holy people, aside from the fact that they still possess and feel original sin and daily repent and strive against it, fall into open sin (as David fell into adultery, murder, and blasphemy), faith and the Spirit have departed from them. This is so because the Holy Spirit does not permit sin to rule and gain the upper hand in such a way that sin is committed, but the Holy Spirit represses and restrains it so that it does not do what it wishes. If sin does what it wishes, the Holy Spirit and faith are not present, for St. John says, ‘No one born of God commits sin; he cannot sin.’ Yet, it is also true, as the same St. John writes, ‘If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.’” Smalkald Articles, III,III,43-44)

“Our churches condemn the Anabaptists who deny that those who have once been justified can lose the Holy Spirit, and also those who contend that some may attain such perfection in this life that they cannot sin.” Augsburg Confession,XII,7)

“It is very necessary that this gospel be preached to those in our day who know the gospel, to me and others like me, who can teach and train all the world and consider themselves very close to God, as having entirely devoured God’s Spirit, with feathers and bones...For this judgement strikes at what lies deepest in the heart of man, the spiritual self-conceit, which in poverty, disgrace, and misfortune - and just because of this - regards itself as first...It reaches very high and strikes very fine people; yes, it terrifies the most eminent saints, for Christ is here addressing this warning to his apostles. We see how fear has here gripped the greatest saints, and how many have here fallen from their high spiritual estate...They fell because of the vicious, insidious deception by which they became secure and thought; We have become so close to God that there is no longer any danger...Behold how Saul fell! How he allowed David to fall! How Peter had to fall! How several disciples of Paul fell!” (M. Luther, Kirchen Postille, 1543. St. Louis Edition, Vol. XI, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis)



“David’s Forgiveness” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld



“The Repentance of the Prodigal Son” by Rudolf Schäfer

In contrast to the stern warnings of the Law, the Biblical Gospel assures the humble believer that his salvation is sure because it rests solely upon the promises of God. The God who has called us to faith and who accomplishes His work of sanctification within us also keeps and preserves us in the true faith to life everlasting. Hence the security of our salvation does not depend upon the intensity of our faith, the frequency of our good works, or the holiness of our lives. The salvation of the Christian is certain because it depends on the grace and power of God alone!

“In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade - kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:3-5)

“And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast. To Him be the power forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 5:10-11)

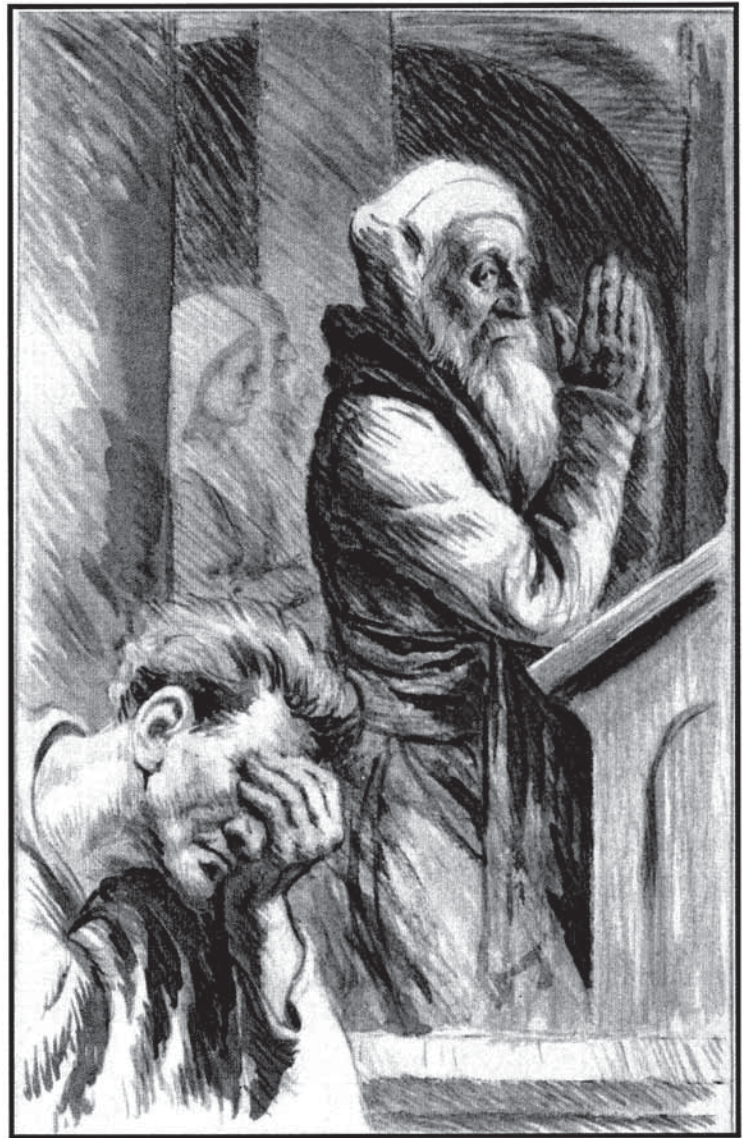
“Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:6)

“He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ is faithful.” (1 Corinthians 1:9)

“But the Lord is faithful and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.” (2 Thessalonians 3:3)

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

The doctrine of preservation in the faith as it is taught in Holy Scripture appears to present us with a contradiction. Those passages which warn against falling from the faith are difficult to harmonize with the texts that assure us that God will preserve us in the faith. The Biblical dialectic of Law and Gospel reflected in the doctrine of preservation in the faith is to some extent an indication of the on-going tension between saint and sinner which exists in the life of every Christian.



“The Pharisee and the Publican” by Karl Bauer

“Thus the Christian must learn to live in constant tension between these two. When he begins to lean over to the left, toward pride and presumption and confidence in the strength of his faith, and to trust in his own character, then the warnings against apostasy, the Savior’s ‘Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation,’ pushes him upright once more. But usually man, even the Christian man, whose heart is never fully what it ought to be, begins then to lean over to the right - he becomes afraid and begins to doubt that he will ever make it to the gates of the heavenly city. Once again the Savior comes and stands on the other side to support him and to push him upright with his promise, ‘Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God’ (Isaiah 41:10). And he knows that when his pilgrimage comes to an end, ‘all the trumpets’ will be blowing ‘for him on the other side’.” (Siegbert Becker, The Foolishness of God. Milwaukee: 1982, Northwestern Publishing House)



“The Restoration of the Prodigal Son” by Rudolf Schäfer

Although reason cannot comprehend or coherently explain that which appears to be a contradiction, by faith we accept both God’s warnings and His promises as completely true. There is a fundamental principle of faith at issue here which applies in every part of the Christian life. Whenever a believer is confronted by a choice between that which seems reasonable and that which is Biblical, the Christian will always choose to stand upon the solid rock of God’s inspired Word.



“Jesus Weeping Over Jerusalem” by J. James Tissot

“Why Some and Not Others?”

Why are some people saved while others are damned? (“*Cur alii, alii non?*”) This perplexing question has troubled Christian thinkers for many centuries. It has aptly been called the “*cross of the theologians*” (“*crux theologorum*”). The itch to answer the “*cross of the theologians*” has led many astray. We must be content with what Scripture says, bowing in humble adoration before the superior wisdom of God (Romans 11:33). The pertinent Scriptural principles may be summarized as follows:

1. There is no difference among men. All are sinners who have fallen far short of the glory of God and deserve only death and damnation.

“Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.” (Romans 5:12; cf. 8:7; Ephesians 2:3; Psalm 51:5)

2. God desires the salvation of every human being. There is no difference in His attitude toward men.

“This is good and pleases God our Savior who wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:3-4; cf. John 3:16)

3. All those who are saved were chosen for salvation by God, given faith as a free gift of His grace, and preserved in that faith by the power of the Holy Spirit.

“But join me in suffering for the Gospel by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.” (1 Timothy 1:8-9; cf. Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:11-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17)

4. Whoever is lost is damned by his own fault because he has rejected the truth and spurned God’s salvation.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.” (Matthew 23:37; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12; Acts 7:51; Hosea 13:9)

“But whenever something in the discussion of this subject soars too high and goes beyond these limits we must with Paul place our finger on our lips and say, ‘Who are you, a man, to answer back to God?’” (Formula of Concord,SD,XI,63)



“The Return of the Prodigal” by Karl Bauer