

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

“...THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN.” — JOHN 10:35

eph 3:8-20 To me, who am less than the least of all the
saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the
Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is
the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been
hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that
now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the
principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose
which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and
access with confidence through faith in Him. Therefore I ask that you do not lose
heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this reason I bow my knees
to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven
and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His
glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,
that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted
and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the
saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to
know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you
may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him
who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above
all that we ask or think, according to the
power that works in us, to Him be
glory in the church by Christ
Jesus to all generations,
forever and ever.

Amen.

the love of Christ
which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the
fullness of God

ON THE 12TH DAY OF CHRISTMAS...

Professor Joseph Lau · Eau Claire, Wisconsin

The twelfth day of Christmas is January 5th, the last day of the traditional Christmas season. It serves to usher in the next church season — that of Epiphany. Historically, Epiphany was much more widely celebrated in Christian churches than was Christmas.

Epiphany is not a word used in the Bible, but it does convey a Biblical concept. Epiphany (from the Greek word *epiphaneia*) means “manifestation” — or a “showing forth.”

This season of the church year varies in length but lasts until the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent.

During the Epiphany season Christian churches often communicate three events in Christ’s life in particular: the visit of the Magi, His baptism, and His first miracle at the wedding of Cana.

THE MAGI VISIT

In what way was the visit of the Magi an epiphany?

The Magi were “wise men” belonging to a priestly sect from the East. Contrary to what is often depicted, they were not present at Jesus’ birth. Rather, they followed a star to Jesus’ house and there knelt down to worship the “young Child” and presented Him with precious gifts from their homeland.

As was prophesied in Isaiah, “The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.... They shall bring gold and incense, and they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD” (60:3,6).

In this way Jesus was manifested as king of both the Jews and the Gentiles. He was the “Star of Jacob” (Numbers 24:17) and the “Rod from the stem of Jesse” (Isaiah 11:1)



JESUS’ BAPTISM

How was Jesus’ baptism an epiphany?

John the Baptist said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)

At Jesus’ baptism the Trinity was on display. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove, and the voice of the Father confirmed Jesus to be His Son in whom He was well-pleased.

Unlike John, who could baptize with water only, Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

This event marked the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry, His public “showing forth.”



JESUS’ FIRST MIRACLE

The word *miracle* is overused in our society today — from a “miraculous” catch in a football game to the “wonder” of a baby sleeping through the night.

True miracles can be performed only by God. The New Testament records at least thirty-seven miracles of Christ.

Only the Gospel of John records the “beginning of signs” at the wedding in Cana (See John chapter 2). Jesus changed over one hundred gallons of plain water into “good wine.” This epiphany of Jesus manifested His glory to His disciples, after which, we are told, they “believed in Him.”

Like all Jesus’ miracles, this first one was performed to help people and to strengthen the faith of His followers.

Perhaps Jesus’ greatest miracle was the fact that His love for lost sinners brought Him to Earth to live, suffer, and die in our place, thus redeeming otherwise lost and condemned sinners from their sins.

The length of the Epiphany season varies, depending on the beginning of the Lenten season. This year it is a bit longer than usual.

During this season let us focus on this wonderful gift our “True Love” gave to us in the manifestation of our Savior Jesus Christ.

*Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to Thee we raise,
Manifested by the star
To the sages from afar,
Branch of royal David’s stem,
In Thy birth at Bethlehem.
Anthems be to Thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.*

*Manifest at Jordan’s stream,
Prophet, Priest, and King supreme,
And at Cana, Wedding-guest,
In Thy Godhead manifest,
Manifest in power divine,
Changing water into wine.
Anthems be to Thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.*

Christian Marriage

Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer • Hecla, South Dakota

“...Submitting to one another in the fear of God” Ephesians 5:21

Most of you have probably heard the stunning statistic that 50% of all marriages in America end in divorce. When we look at different statistical websites, the breakdown is even more alarming: 40% to 50% of all first marriages end in divorce, around 65% of all second marriages end in divorce, and about 75% of all third marriages end in divorce. (www.divorcerate.org)

So the odds are stronger than 50/50 that you or someone in your family has gone through a divorce.

But of the estimated one million divorces that took place in 2008, how many of those do you suppose ended because the spouses “submitted to one another in the fear of God”? (See Ephesians 5:21)

While no statistical information on this question can be found on the worldwide web, I think we all would agree that few, if any, divorces would fit into this category. Rather, most marriages that end in divorce do so because of the sinful selfishness of one or both of the spouses.

To “submit to one another” means to rank oneself and one’s own needs below the other person’s.

When we think of the word “submit” in connection with marriage, we typically think of what Paul writes to wives in the next verses of Ephesians 5: “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband

is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.”

The apostle speaks of how the Christian wife willingly submits to her husband out of love for him and for her Lord.

But in our theme verse Paul is writing of the willing, mutual submission which takes place between Christians in general. The Christian is emulating what his Savior did for him.

...As Jesus Humbled Himself!

The great, eternal, almighty Son of God made Himself least of all by taking on the form of a servant to be our brother and Redeemer.

- He who had the wealth of heaven and earth was born in poverty.
- He who was the Giver of the Law was born under the Law.
- He who had the highest status of being God made Himself of no reputation.
- Then the One in whom is life died the innocent death of the cross for us.

This is how the great Son of God was willing to humble Himself in order to save us from our sins.

Writing to the Philippians on the humility of Christ, the Apostle Paul then declares, “in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for

O BLESSED HOME
WHERE MAN AND WIFE
TOGETHER LEAD A
GODLY LIFE,
BY DEEDS THEIR FAITH
CONFESSING!
THERE MANY A HAPPY
DAY IS SPENT,
THERE JESUS GLADLY
WILL CONSENT
TO TARRY WITH
HIS BLESSING.

♥ TLH #624:1 ♥

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CLC PREACHING STATIONS

Many CLC congregations have members who live a great distance from their home congregation or other sister CLC congregations. As the Lord gives the opportunity, preaching stations have been established. Pastors from several congregations serve these small groups with the Word and Sacrament on a regular basis. Some of these groups meet in homes, others in rented facilities. Visitors are always warmly welcomed. Those who are considering a move, or are just traveling through the area, are encouraged to contact these preaching stations and worship with them.

Location	Pastoral Contact	Lay Contact
Alaska, Anchorage	Pastor David Fuerstenau (907) 225-2842	Josh Schultz (907) 350-6981
Alaska, Fairbanks	Pastor David Fuerstenau (907) 225-2842	Erich Hoffmann (907) 488-3017
Arizona, Casa Grande	Pastor Delwyn Maas (602) 919-0519	David Althoff (520) 836-4632
California, Pasadena (L.A. area)	Pastor Delwyn Maas (650) 964-5915	Mr. Mike Collins (818) 883-1749
California, Modesto	Pastor Steven Karp (510) 581-6637	Mr. Roy Cameron (209) 772-0934
Florida, Orlando	Pastor John Schierenbeck (863) 299-4084	Mr. Paul Kuehne (407) 595-5589
Iowa, Sioux Center	Pastor James Albrecht (507) 853-4417	Mr. Roger Ver Mulm (712) 722-2805
Michigan, Cadillac	Pastor Timothy Holland (616) 532-0198	Mr. Bob Remus (231) 832-2097
Michigan, Iron Mountain	Pastor Ed Starkey 906-265-2124	
Minnesota, Eden Prairie (SW Twin Cities area)	Pastor David Schierenbeck (651) 454-1915	Mr. Allan Johnson (952) 474-6671
New Mexico, Albuquerque	Mr. Robin Vogtsland (505) 892-6934	
Ohio, Cincinnati	Pastor Todd Ohlmann (314) 517-0177	Dr. David Menton (859) 534-5987
Ohio, Cleveland	Pastor Walter Schaller (248) 677-7242	
Oklahoma, Oklahoma City	Pastor Matthew Hanel (973) 733-4535	
Tennessee, Monterey	Pastor Nathanael Mayhew (866) 962-9034	Mr. Wayne Everhart (270) 618-4387
Texas, Austin	Pastor Roland Gurgel (281) 353-2533	Mr. Chuck Kurth (512) 794-8991
Virginia, Fairfax (Washington, DC area)	Pastor Glenn Oster (803) 926-0603	Mr. David Loop (703) 250-202
Washington, Withrow	Pastor Terrel Kesterson (509) 327-4203	Mr. Ray Lillquist (509) 683-1192
Wisconsin, Green Bay	Pastor Paul Krause (920) 398-2778	

Chapel Talk on Chapter 20 of the Book **OUT OF NECESSITY**

A History of the Church of the Lutheran Confession • Pastor David Lau

Dear Friends in Christ,

Chapter 20 of the history of the CLC is entitled “The Changing Times.”

Everyone will have to admit that there have been many changes in the world and in the church world since our church body was organized in 1960. But have there been changes in the Church of the Lutheran Confession?

By God’s grace our doctrinal platform remains the same now as it was then. That is good, because it is written: “**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**” How happy we can be that God does not change! Nor does His love for us sinners change! Jesus died for the sins of the world, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. Those facts do not change, and they assure us that our sins are forgiven, and we have a place in heaven reserved for us.

But there are many lesser things that

have changed, even in our church body. In 1960 probably all of our congregations used the King James Version of the Bible in their services and confirmation classes. But since the language of this 1611 Bible is not as well understood as it once was, many of our congregations are now using more recent translations, such as the New King James Version or the New International Version.

The Lutheran Hymnal of 1941 is still the hymnal that is used most often in our services, I suppose, but many of our

congregations now make extended use of the *Worship Supplement 2000*.

In the early years of Immanuel Lutheran College the foreign languages taught in high school were Latin and German, but now for practical reasons the foreign language that is taught is Spanish. But those who are training to become pastors are still being taught the ancient languages of Greek and Hebrew. No changes are possible here, because our God has given us His Word in these two languages, and if our pastors are to become well-equipped to use God’s Word, they must know these languages.

Do you know that in 1960 there were no women pastors in any Lutheran congregation in our country? Today there are many women pastors in Lutheran congregations, and the seminaries of some Lutheran church bodies have almost as many female students as male students. Should we

TODAY SOME PEOPLE WANT TO SAY THAT GOD HAS NO OBJECTION TO SAME-SEX MARRIAGE BECAUSE, THEY SAY, GOD HAS CREATED SOME PEOPLE TO BE HOMOSEXUAL, AND THEY SHOULD NOT BE DEPRIVED. IS THIS AN ACCEPTABLE CHANGE?

change like the rest? On this matter we cannot change if we want to be faithful to our Lord and His Word. For the Lord’s Apostle Paul wrote: “**I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man.**”

In 1960 segregation between the races was common in many areas of our country. This has changed. Is this an acceptable change? There is nothing in God’s Word that tells us that races must be kept separate, but

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CLC Convention, 1963, Calvary Lutheran Church, Marquette, Michigan. Your editor, at the time an ILC Seminary student, recognizes most of the “faces” in the picture.

"And the Winners Are..."

Pastor David Fuerstenau · Ketchikan, Alaska

It seems that people of most every culture enjoy a good contest and/or an award.

Every year in our country we have Miss America and Mrs. America contests. There is the 'Man of the Year,' 'Woman of the Year,' and Person of the Decade. Various voters choose the Best Picture and Most Valuable Player.

Surely somewhere there must be a Valentine's Day contest of some sort: best looking couple, most-in-love couple, best dancing couple. Even the late Paul Harvey had a daily most-years-of-wedded-bliss couple.

So why can't we have such an award? Only instead of concentrating on cupids and hearts, flowers and candy, Hollywood love and Larry King's marriage numbers, it would serve our purpose well to focus on the lives of some Biblical couples who were, no doubt, very much in love. In doing so, we stand to gain some insight into what true love is all about.

And the nominees are...

1) Adam and Eve

Not only was their wedding attended and officiated by God—they were the first married couple! Adam was a one-woman man and Eve a one-man woman. If not married the longest, their marriage was certainly in contention for being the longest!

2) Isaac and Rebecca

These two might be the poster couple for an 'arranged marriage' that worked and lasted! After Abraham's servant

We don't have all the details, but it seems obvious that this couple served God effectually and faithfully for years. And when all is said and done, this is what a truly Christian life and marriage is all about, is it not?!

had journeyed far, found Rebecca and brought her back to Palestine, we are given to believe that almost at first sight Isaac 'loved her.' Isaac may have been somewhat of a 'mamma's boy' before, but Rebecca likely changed that quickly.

3) Joseph and Mary

Angel messengers, public scandal and contemplated divorce, heavenly intervention, miraculous conception and virgin birth, the Babe who was the Savior and Son of the Highest.... Surely these two were strong contenders based on the wedding/birth/Savior elements alone.

All in all, three couples worthy of consideration!

And the winners of our Valentine's Day contest are...a fourth coup:

Priscilla and Aquila!

If you disagree—and before you cry 'foul' or 'obviously rigged'—consider the following. These two Christians were evidently close friends of the Apostle Paul. They had first met Paul in Corinth after they had been expelled from Rome by the Emperor Claudius (see Acts 18:2).

Their relationship with Paul was not hurt by the fact that all three of them

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God's Word tells us: "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all."

Today some people want to say that God has no objection to same-sex marriage because, they say, God has created some people to be homosexual, and they should not be deprived. Is this an acceptable change? No, it is not, because God in His Word has told us: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

But, of course, all of these sins can be repented of, for God's Word continues: "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

So there are some changes that are acceptable and other changes that are unacceptable. In a changing world we need to be on guard lest we get swept away by these changes into a way of life and behavior that God condemns in His Word.

In 1960 our CLC Board of Missions was responsible for a few mission congregations in this country and for one congregation in Japan. Today this

board is trying to help church bodies in several countries in Africa and in two church bodies in India; three other foreign church bodies have applied for fellowship with our church body, to be considered at the 2010 convention (Editor's note: Of the three church bodies, two were accepted into fellowship [groups in Nepal and Myanmar], and action regarding one was postponed). The membership of all of these church bodies in other countries is much larger than the membership of the CLC in our country.

This is a big change, but certainly we recognize this expansion of our work as a good change, as a blessing from our God.

Another board whose work has greatly expanded is the Board of Trustees. In 1960 there was a time when the balance in the treasury was \$9.91. Today the Board of Trustees is handling more than a million dollars. The entire Ingram Estate with all of its land and building was purchased for \$85,000 in 1963, and that was considered almost too much for our church body to handle. Now we have the new Academic Center which cost over two million dollars.

Changes such as these are precious blessings from our God. But as we enjoy these blessings, let us remember that there are no changes in our God or His Word. O Lord, keep us faithful in a time of great change. Let us sing WS #743: 3-4.



CLC Presidium elected at 1963 Convention: President Paul Abrecht, Moderator George Barthels, Secretary Paul Nolting, Vice President Maynard Witt

"Jesus Christ Is The Same Yesterday, Today, And Forever."

(HEBREWS 13:8)

Pastor Jyothi Benjamin, Secretary

Dearly beloved in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The wonderful Nellore atmosphere welcomed all the pastors of the CLCI, BELC, and HCLCN and gave good pleasure to everyone who has participated in this 10th Joint Asian pastoral conference, held at Nellore from 6th to 7th October 2010.

Once again it is a joy to see through this conference that everyone is connected in prayer and spiritual fellowship with such a unity. Every effort was made by all the pastors to conduct this conference in a very successful manner. The representatives of CLCM from Myanmar are unable to attend the conference because of the border difficulties but they sent their report to the conference by e-mail. Rev. Matthew Ude presented the CLCM report to the conference.

It was a great blessing for all the CLCI, BELC, and HCLCN pastors to participate in this pastoral conference and receive the greetings, blessings, and encouraging words from the wonderful Lord's people, honorable president of the CLC, Rev. John Schierenbeck, and honorable Chairman of the Mission Board, Rev. Todd Ohlmann.

Everyone was blessed by the words of encouragement and inspiring devotions from the respected Missionaries Rev.



During morning devotion

David Koenig and Rev. Matthew Ude.

All the mission reports showed the much more improvement in their mission activities. We thank the Lord for the profitable and helpful time of teaching, learning, witnessing, and getting ready to discover more opportunities in spreading the gospel in many new places.

The Lord in His rich mercy and



Morning devotion by Rev. Dave Koenig



10th Joint Asian English Pastoral Conference attendees

sovereign grace gave more energy to our hands through this conference 2010 to do His work. Verily Jesus has ordered a great revival through this Joint Asian Pastoral Conference.

We pray that our Lord be pleased to bless all such corporate endeavors through this type of PASTORAL CONFERENCES and thus further His work. Our lives are in the hands of the Lord. "Bless the Lord, Oh my soul and all that is within me. Bless the Lord, Oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

Praying that through this Joint Asian conference we would be led into a



Top: Rev. Moses presenting the report on BELC Nellore. Right: Rev. Raju Bhitrakoti presenting report on HCLCN. Left: Brother Raju presenting the report on the CLCI activities

deeper unity and knowledge of the love of Christ. And thus be brought into the enjoyment of the fullness of God with all the beloved brothers and sisters, under His Headship, and serve Him for His glory in His Church.



Left: Pastor Jyothi presenting the report on CLCI Seminary Middle: Rev. Victor presenting the report on BELC Kadapa Right: Rev. Rajamani presenting the report on BELC Chennai



Jesus Gives True Rest (For Our Souls!)

Pastor Andrew Schaller • Watertown, South Dakota

“At that time Jesus answered and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.’” Matthew 11:25-30

IT’S A FACT OF LIFE FOR human beings — we get tired.

Whether it’s the body or the mind, we need down-time; we need rest. We need to eat good food which our fearfully and wonderfully made bodies (Psalm 139:14) can convert to energy. We need good sleep to allow our bodies to recharge and recuperate.

Our souls also need rest.

We commit sin each day, sins of thought, word and deed. Our consciences, when aware, keep track of our misdeeds. Bearing witness to the law written in our hearts, our consciences accuse and cause guilt. The knowledge of our guilt is a heavy burden to bear (cf. Psalm 38:3-4).

We generally know our limits. We have all learned from experience what physical burdens or material items we can attempt to pick up and carry. We know not to try to grasp and pick up the car when it’s stuck in the snow!

Oh that we always remembered our weakness when it comes to sin!

We are easily deceived — sometimes by ourselves, sometimes by the world, sometimes by Satan — into thinking that we can bear or at least shoulder our sin

and guilt for a time. We overestimate our strength. In our weakness of self-deception we tell ourselves that we can ‘handle it.’ Then other wrong thoughts enter our minds: “I’ll do better next time.” “I won’t do that again.” “I’ve learned my lesson.”

The fact is that we can’t bear our burden of sin. We can’t ‘handle’ temptation on our own. It’s useless to vow to do better on our own or promise to “pull ourselves up by our bootstraps” and ‘just do it.’

We cannot and dare not attempt to bear our sin and guilt. It is necessary that we despair of our own strength, our own ‘ability’ and ‘will-power.’ It is only after we have been led — through God’s Law — to see that we cannot bear the burden, that the Spirit of God comes on His mission, enabling us to throw ourselves upon Jesus’ invitation.

What invitation? Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man, invites us to come to Him with our burdens of sin and guilt.

Jesus doesn’t give us a ‘pep talk.’

He doesn’t tell us that if we try harder, we can do it.

He doesn’t tell us not to worry about it.

He promises to take our burden from us, to lift the weight of sin and guilt!

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Proof Positive

Teacher David Bernthal • Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

“**Seeing is believing**” we’ve heard people say.

We know that believing is a matter of the heart. Faith is a gift of God that goes far beyond what our eyes are able to discern. That having been said, we have many incidents in Scripture which show us that the Lord **does** demonstrate that our faith is not fantasy. Throughout the ages He has given glimpses of His divine power in miracle upon miracle, thus underscoring the validity of His words.

Such is the incident before us today—the Transfiguration of Christ.

Jesus had already revealed Himself as the Messiah to His disciples in words and by many miracles. The disciples believed in Him. Now Jesus was to give a special demonstration of His power and majesty to validate the faith of Peter, James, and John.

The disciples saw Jesus, their constant companion for about three years, transfigured before them. His face and clothing began to shine with brilliance. As if that wasn’t enough, Moses and Elijah suddenly appeared and began a conversation with Jesus, speaking with Him of His coming death on the cross.

This surely was an underscoring of Jesus’ own claim—the exclamation point after Peter’s declaration: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!” (Matthew 16:16)

But let’s consider for a moment how sinful humans respond to divine revelations. There are probably as many responses as there are people. The Scriptures record how many people re-

sponded with puzzlement and others with stubbornness or hardness of heart.

Indeed, when sinful humans come in contact with the wholly divine, fear is inevitable. Peter’s response in our text is one example. When he saw the glory and majesty of Jesus’ divinity shining forth—along with the patriarchs Moses and Elijah—what was his response?

“Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’ - **because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid**” (Mark 9:5).

Awaiting Divine Instruction

Being at a loss for words does not stop some people from prattling on anyway. Peter was afraid and cast about in his own mind for a response to the wonderful revelation he had just witnessed of Christ’s divinity—and he babbled. His mind must have screamed out, “Say something!”

When confronted with situations we cannot understand, we too may be tempted to cast about for “something” to say or do! We may be tempted to make laws or rules (where God’s Word makes none); others may let commandments slide for convenience’ sake. In effect, we end up trying to build temples for our Lord of our own design, thinking this will be pleasing to our God.

Rather, these are moments to be still and await divine instruction.

Peter, James, and John heard the

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“ALL HISTORY IS GOD’S STORY!”

Some twists and turns in His Story

Exodus chapters 1 & 2

Paul R. Koch · Eau Claire, Wisconsin

The inspired book of Exodus brings us to a turning point in history—not just in the history of ancient Mediterranean cultures but in the history of humanity, global. CHAPTER ONE (please read it now) starts out with the standard recital of a tribe’s lineage, listing all the sons of its patriarch—but soon comes the bald statement that they all died.

All that generation died, and every generation after that died, too. Our human lot is to live, reproduce, and pass away into history—but during those four centuries God blessed the Israelites until Egypt was filled with them (v. 7).

That ethnic imbalance spelled danger to a new king, so he reacted as any despot would. Persecution, enslavement, and ethnic cleansing were adopted as federal social policies to prevent insurrection and civil war (vv. 8-10).

How could God’s people survive? Man proposes, but God disposes, having His ways of making His plans succeed. It didn’t take a civil war to sift the wheat from the chaff—it took only two Jewish women whom the LORD selected to climb the ranks and become high-level federal employees in the Department of Human Services. They became the LORD’s agents to save Jewish boy babies—through whose genetics an unbroken line would be preserved for Kingdom-Come.

God put them there, they knew their purpose in life, and they lived so as to have a good conscience before God (v. 17). There’s a lesson here about saving babies from legalized abortion and

murder—whether at the level of national genocide or individual cases; a nation that sows such a wind will harvest the tornado that it deserves.

Contrariwise, we look forward to seeing Shiphrah and Puah in heaven, shining as the stars (Daniel 12:3) for their service to God and His people.

That’s background for CHAPTER TWO—which informs us that the national abortion/murder mania missed Moses, for his parents obeyed God rather than man (vv. 1-2). They shielded their infant from the murderers until it got too dangerous for them to hide an illegal baby. So they put their cradled child afloat in the Nile—not acting in desperation but in faith (Hebrews 11:23), for they knew God could be relied on to step in and turn everything right-side-up.

God to the Rescue!

As truth IS stranger than fiction, God sent a heathen princess to the rescue! Imagine that! An illegal Jewish baby came under the guardianship of the king of Egypt! The princess knew that harboring a Hebrew baby was a federal crime, but she was touched by the baby’s pitiable sobbing (v. 6), and almost before she could concoct a feasible plan to spare the foundling, Miriam appeared on the scene with an easy, sensible solution to the conundrum.

“Shall I go (so you don’t have to interrupt your bath) and call a nurse (a lactating woman) for you (you’re the one in charge) from the Hebrew women (not an Egyptian, so no ethnic taboo will be violated) that she may nurse the

child (as a surrogate mother) for you (the honorable, thoughtful princess)?” Okay?

Not so fast! As Miriam was gathering up her baby brother to return him to their anxious parents, the Princess was having second thoughts. “Wait up! Since I am adopting this baby as MY baby, I am going to pay the nurse for service rendered. Now you may go!”

If Miriam felt a self-satisfied smirk coming on, she stifled it with a silent “Thank You, LORD, for You are able to do exceedingly abundant above all that we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). Thank You, LORD, for all Your mercies and kindness to my brother and my parents!”

Dear reader, that’s an illustration of how superior God’s ways are to our ways, and it should strengthen our resolve to yield to His will and Word—always.

Moses grew up in the royal household, blessed by God to excel in all mental and physical accomplishments under the tutelage of the most civilized society of that day. The years went by, and knowing he had Hebrew blood in his veins, he felt drawn to identify himself with his kinfolk being brutalized (2:11). How could he endure it?

At that point Moses let himself be detoured by Satan and his own sinful nature, for instead of exploring legal means (or personal, such as leveraging his foster-mother) to modify federal policies—he gave in to fleshly means. He assaulted an abusive Homeland Security officer, murdered him, and tried to conceal the corpse in a sand-dune.

Moses soon discovered he was not welcomed as a savior of his people, and a well-intentioned attempt to arbitrate between two brawling Hebrews backfired in his face. (Read Acts 7:23-28 for Stephen’s insights into this event.)

Murder will out! Pharaoh put a price on his head, and Moses scooted across the border to find refuge in the backwater country of Midian. The Hebrews writer assures us that “by faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:24-27).

Moses forsook his homeland in faith but still lacked humility, good judgment, respect for human life, and reliance on God’s will. God would cull such weeds out of Moses’ heart and soul—even if it took the next forty years to do so. Chastisement is God’s tough-love way of curbing the wayward impulses of His dear child!

In Midian Moses rescued some damsels in distress (vv. 16-17), acquired a wife, received the patronage of a leading clergyman, and then was blessed with fatherhood—life-altering events blueprinted by God to exercise and strengthen godliness in his character.

Meanwhile, God was preparing His people too (v. 24), and at the right time He would bless them by bringing Moses home from those forty years of being trained in God’s school of chastening—a leader now capable of representing the King of kings and Lord of lords—and do so with credit to his Master.

That’s coming in the next chapters of His Story about Moses and Israel.

Praise the LORD, to whom be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end!

* AMEN *



God's Providential Care of His Own

Pastor Paul Fleischer · Cheyenne, Wyoming

True to form, the past holiday season again had various religious articles in the secular press, like one a week ago in the Sunday newspaper magazine about "How Americans Imagine God." Interesting reading, beginning with the survey result that supposedly "about nine in 10 Americans believe in God or some higher power."

A number of the responses describe a pantheistic and impersonal view of God, views which those who know the God of the Bible would reject outright.

A common thread, it is said, woven throughout people's opinions of God is *"quite simply, love... (God is) a pathway to goodness, peace, and brotherhood."* "My God is love!" says one individual. Indeed He is, but the fact that God is love needs to be reconciled with how a Texas pastor describes God, namely, *"sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple with angels praising Him saying Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty."*

As far as we are concerned, God's love and holiness are best reconciled, aren't they, by the Christmas miracle? God's holiness demanded redemption of sinners and atonement for sin—which would take place in space-time history in the person and work of the heaven-sent Messiah, the incarnate Son of God who came to save His people from their sins.

"He that has seen Me," Jesus would say one time, "has seen the Father"

(John 14:9). One of the reasons God sent His Son to this planet is to give all the world a first-hand view of who and what God is—of His love, His grace, His mercy, His forgiveness, His providential care for all who believe on Him.

We say, "God's providential care." A text such as the one before us, though, can cause many folks considerable consternation about God and His ways among men.

Yet, events happen in the lives of each of us which can cause us to wonder about the ways of our God. Specifically, if He is a God of love, why do some things happen as they do? We think of believers like Job and all the trials he had to endure; of Jacob's son Joseph sold to slavery in Egypt; of a prophet like Jeremiah who was cast into a cistern; how others of the Old Testament prophets were treated; how John the Baptist fell victim to Herod's murderous ways; of Daniel tossed into the lion's den; of the Lord's apostles, many of whom — like Stephen — died as martyrs for the Lord; and the list goes on, including the horrific event reported in this text of the slaughter of the innocents.

If there is a God who so loves us that He sent His Son to bear our infirmities and sicknesses, where is this God when His own are subjected to such danger, such evil?

"God on the run"

Our text says: "Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, 'Arise, take the young Child

and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.' When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt...." The people of that day and time perhaps took the holy family's hasty flight to Egypt as a stroke of good luck, a chance happening.

Not so! God had so arranged things! The Lord knew Herod's desperate plot, so He warned Joseph in a dream. And so they "departed for Egypt, and [were] there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt I called My Son.'" Centuries earlier the Lord had preserved Israel in Egypt and kept His covenant with Abraham in spite of the opposition of Pharaoh. So also at this time God preserved His Son in Egypt in the face of the plot of another wicked ruler.

It's been said that we see "God on the run" here—Jesus, the Christ, fleeing for His life as a young Child in the care of His earthly parents! That may at first strike us as odd, but can't we think of times when Jesus "ran away" even as an adult? During the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem one winter, some people wanted Jesus to tell them plainly if He was indeed the Christ. When He answered, "I and the Father are one," they took up stones to stone Him. We read, "again they tried to arrest Him, but He escaped from their hands" (John 10:39).

So there were indeed other times

when Jesus "ran away." And may I suggest it was because of Christmas? I mean, when Jesus humbled Himself and chose to become flesh for us, He had to "run away" from people like Herod and the stone-throwers. Jesus had come to Earth on a saving mission, a mission which would result in His death. BUT it was not to be a death according to the timetable of any earthly ruler. No, when HIS

time came, He would meet death on the accursed tree as a sin-payment for the sins of the whole world. Jesus DIDN'T run away from His betrayers in the Garden of Gethsemane, did He?

He did not, because His time had come!

May we as God's believing children draw comfort and encouragement from these things; the difficult circumstances that occur also in our lives are carefully ordered by God's providential care. Nothing happens purely by luck or chance; though often not clear to our sin-infected view of things, yet there are holy reasons behind the trials, the troubles, the cross-bearing which take place in the lives of God's own.

Slaying of the Innocents

If that's true, why this horrific slaughter of the innocents? How could a loving God who is at the same time a holy God allow this?

We have no answer to satisfy our inquisitive minds—no answer but this: God wants some martyrs. In the 6th chapter of Revelation we are told that the Lamb of God opened the fifth seal

Continued on next page

God's Providential Care of His Own *Continued from Page 17*

which revealed "the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, How long, Lord God, holy and true, until You judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" (Revelation 6:9-10)

Over the centuries there have been—and will be until the end of time—those who must pay the ultimate price, their lives, for their faith and trust in the Lord. Scripture and subsequent church history tell of such martyrs. And may we not include these boy babies of Bethlehem as unconscious martyrs for the Lord's sake—martyrs who are now singing the Savior's praises before His righteous throne in eternal glory?!

Briefly put, when the talk is about a loving and holy God's providential care and plans for His own, we have no right to conclude that those plans will

include His people being free from earthly woe, ill, and evil.

As the supreme example, we have that of the Savior Himself. Yes, He was saved from an untimely death during His infancy, but no providence saved Jesus when God's hour came for Him to be delivered into the hands of His enemies! And then Jesus went through the torments of hell, being forsaken of God and dying on the cross—all for us! That too was part of God's wondrous plan for our eternal salvation.

When you and I look at our lives and seem to see but the underside of a fine piece of embroidery (the loose ends and tangled threads), remember that in eternal glory the perfect pattern that a loving God has been weaving will be seen. It will be wondrous to our eyes, and we shall praise Him eternally for the masterpiece He has worked out in our lives here on Earth.



Proof Positive *Continued from Page 13*

voice of God call from a cloud that overshadowed them, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Mark 9:7)

God directs us to His Son for our instructions. Jesus, the Word of God, is the source for our direction in life. Whether we are confused, misled, or "out of our minds" with fear, sticking to the directives of Holy Scripture is what will give us the peace that only God can give.

Long after the transfiguration, Peter through divine inspiration wrote as follows about the Transfiguration incident: "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made

known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty... And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed..." (2 Peter 1:16-17).

What a blessing our God has given us—His ever true, ever reliable Word! The Lord has even given us confirmations of His Word through miracles, enabling us to "see" with the eyes of faith through the power of the Holy Spirit.

That's something to believe in!



And the Winners Are... *Continued from Page 8*

were tentmakers. Obviously the couple was hospitable, for Paul stayed with them in Corinth while he taught there and preached Christ crucified and risen again. The Scripture records also indicate that church meetings were held in the home of this hospitable couple.

It seems likely that sometime during Paul's stay in Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla put their lives on the line for the apostle. In his Epistle to the Romans Paul wrote: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles" (16:3-4).

And when Paul departed Corinth for Syria, Aquila and Priscilla were with him. At Ephesus this dynamic couple met the equally dynamic Apollos who, though he was "fervent in spirit" and "spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord," yet "he knew only the baptism of John." Hence Aquila and Priscilla "took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:25-26).

After further travels, Aquila and

Priscilla ended up back in Ephesus.

We don't have all the details, but it seems obvious that this couple served God effectually and faithfully for years. And when all is said and done, this is what a truly Christian life and marriage is all about, is it not?!

In what might be called a 'love' chapter (1 John 4), John testified that 'God is love,' 'love is of God,' and 'everyone who loves is born of God.' He also said that 'we love Him because He first loved us,' and God 'sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

Working, hosting, helping, evangelizing for Christ, praying, sacrificing, serving, teaching, suffering and traveling together—always together for a lifetime! Always together in Christ—giving honor and glory to God in everything!

If that's not true love, what is?

Aquila and Priscilla – our Valentine
Life Award winners!



Jesus Gives True Rest (for our Souls!) *Continued from Page 12*

Moreover, Jesus doesn't offer merely to take our burden for a while and then return it to us. He invites us to give up our burden and trade it with Him. He'll take our burden of sin in return for His righteous robe which weighs nothing! He was without sin and guilt. Jesus' own burden is easy—feather-light!

So it is that Jesus gives our burdened souls true rest. He is our Sabbath (a word which means rest). He is "the end of the law for righteousness" for all those who are in Christ Jesus (cf. Romans 10:4).

We "learn of Him" not to attempt to satisfy God's law by our actions, but to trust in the perfect life of Jesus, our lowly, Law-abiding substitute.

Truly, only "babes"—those who have been equipped with a child-like faith—take Jesus up on His invitation, praising and thanking Him for His grace and mercy.

In a sinful and burdensome world, Jesus alone gives real rest.



Christian Marriage *Cont. from Page 4*

the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus..." (Philippians 2:3b-5).

Rather than being worldly minded, putting our needs above the needs of others, according to our position "in Christ" and by faith in Him we seek to think of others better than ourselves and thus look out for the interests of others.

Now, with all this in mind let us return to the marriage section of Ephesians 5. Before addressing wives and husbands individually, the apostle speaks of the Christians "submitting to one another in the fear of God." Out of holy fear and love for God who has saved us, we willingly submit ourselves to our fellow believers.

And should this not be especially true between Christian husbands and wives?!

Think of the Christian husband who is not primarily concerned about his own needs, his own wants, and his own interests, but in the fear of God places the needs of his wife, the wants of his wife, and the interests of his wife ahead of his own.

Similarly, think of the Christian wife whose priority is not her own agenda, but the agenda of her husband.

What a blessed home this would be, where in the fear of God the primary concern of each Christian spouse is the needs of his or her spouse! ♥

Announcements

Installation: In accord with our usage and order, Neal Radichel, who was called as pastor of Luther Memorial Church of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, was installed on Sunday, January 2, 2011. Participating in the installation service were Pastors Mark Bernthal, Wayne Eichstadt, Paul Krause, and Pastor Emeritus John H. Johannes. — Michael Schierenbeck, Vacancy Pastor

CORRECTION: Christian Day School teachers at St. John's Lutheran School, Okabena, Minn. are Erin Libby and Chad Seybt (January 2011 issue, p. 13). The editor regrets his misidentifications.

Lutheran Spokesman

"...THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN." — JOHN 10:35

Postmaster: Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, MN 55113 and additional offices (825-580). ISSN#0024-7537.

Send address corrections (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 2750 Oxford Street North, Roseville MN 55113

The Lutheran Spokesman is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). Website address: www.clclutheran.org. Editor: Paul Fleischer, 1741 E. 22nd Street, Cheyenne, WY 82001-4138, E-Mail to paulgf@qwestoffice.net; Assistant Editor: Paul R. Koch; Art Director/Designer: Matthew Schaser; Staff Artist: John Fox, Staff: Theodore Barthels, David Bernthal, Wayne Eichstadt, Warren Fanning, Daniel Fleischer, David Fuerstenau, Mark Gullerud, John Klatt, Paul Krause, Joseph Lau, Nathanael Mayhew, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, Andrew Schaller, Thomas Schuetze. Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Fleischer six weeks before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent to Editor Fleischer. Business Manager: Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. E-Mail to BennoSydow@yahoo.com. Individual subscriptions {foreign-U.S. currency only}: \$18.00 {\$22.00} for one year; \$34.00 {\$42.00} for two years; \$50.00 {\$62.00} for three years sent in bulk to congregations: \$15.00. Cover Design: Nate Ude • Spokesman Online Version at: www.lutheranspokesman.org Printed in U.S.A.