



## The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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Issue # 412

### **Things Most Surely Believed Among Us Surrounding Christ's Birth**

We would like to look at a few things — things that are most surely believed among us. One of the bases for our stability and for our being faithful to the Lord is the Word of God and our belief in the Word of God — things which are most surely believed among us.

A brother shared with me some thoughts of what another brother had shared elsewhere for

a message today. I was rather surprised at his thoughts. I would like to share a few thoughts with you quickly before I go into the message. He used the title, "The Conflict Between Christ and Santa Claus." I thought, "How ever would you make a message out of that?" However, knowing the brother I thought, "Surely he said it well." I am not sure if we are fully

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aware of how protected we are from the influence that surrounds us in our neighbours and those around us who are looking at Santa Claus as something great. Our Christian day school, Sunday schools, and church services are a wonderful blessing to each of us, and each of our children as we are taught in the things of the Lord and we most surely believe the things of God and not the things of Santa Claus.

He listed seven points of con-

flict between Jesus Christ and Santa Claus. I want you to know at the beginning each of you boys and girls, and each one here, that we have no confidence in Santa Claus. It is a false hope and a deceptive thing. Even though the world might take these points and believe them, we do not believe them. I heard this story how that Santa Claus was supposed to have been having very good travelling because of the north winds and his tail wind had

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been taking him (I am not sure how fast) over Africa and headed for the U.S.. He was supposedly having a great view because of the miles of height that he was travelling. I thought “How can people believe such things?” Maybe they believe more than what we realize.

1) *The conflict between Jesus Christ and Santa Claus is that the world believes Santa Claus is supernatural.* Jesus Christ certainly is divine. In my mind there is no conflict, but possibly there is a conflict in the minds of some people. Santa Claus certainly is not supernatural either, even though people would believe that he comes down their chimney and he does all these strange things. He certainly is not natural even. It is a fake and it is false.

2) *There is the point of conflict that if you were not good last year and Santa Claus did not give you anything this year he is coming again.* Be good this year and next year you will see him again. Jesus Christ is coming again but Santa Claus is not coming. That is a fake.

3) *People believe Santa is everywhere in one night.* People believe that. Santa Claus is all over the world, and all these different homes in one night. That is a deception of the world. Jesus

Christ and God are everywhere present. Jesus Christ can be everywhere present through the indwelling of the heart of the believer. Through the Holy Ghost indwelling our heart, Jesus can be everywhere present. God is everywhere present, but Satan and Santa Claus cannot do that.

4) *Santa Claus is looked at as a miraculous gift giver.* Remember that Christ and God are the givers of “Every good gift and every perfect gift” (James 1:17). “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.”

5) *Santa is believed to know all about you whether you are good or bad.* That is not true, but God does. God knows whether you are good or bad. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

6) *Apparently, people believe that he exists forever.* Again, this is a false deception. In contrast God and Christ are eternal. 7) *The conflict is given that much joy is given by Santa Claus.* Well, in Christ we have true joy, but not in Santa Claus.

I thought it might be interesting to share those thoughts. They

stirred my thinking. I did not realize that our people would even understand maybe quite that much about Santa Claus. If you have been hearing those things, correct your thinking. The conflict between Santa Claus and Jesus Christ is no conflict to the Christian. There is no comparison whatsoever.

However, there are some things that are most surely believed among us and I would like to name some of those things. I was thinking most of the week that I would preach on the Word of God. Today, I felt strongly led to change the message. *I have ten short, simple messages that I would like to share with you that come from God surrounding the birth of Christ.* I am impressed with this somewhat. There is the hymn we sing

“Christ is born, the great Anointed.

Heav’n and earth His praises sing!

Oh, receive whom God appointed,

For your Prophet, Priest, and King.

Let us learn the wondrous story

Of great Redeemer’s birth.

Spread the brightness of His glory,

Till it cover all the earth.”

[Hark! What mean those Holy Voices — #98 in *The Church Hymnal* — verses 4 and 6]. Those words caught my attention. Things started to come to mind.

Let us read Hebrews 1:1–4. “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (3) Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (4) Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”

Note in this portion of Scripture that God revealed Himself down through the generations of time in various ways (“in divers manners”) different ways that He used to do that. He “spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.” In these last days He is speaking unto us. How? “By his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things.” Where is Jesus today? It says, “When he had by himself purged

our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” He is in heaven with God at the Father’s right hand observing us and knowing all about us. He has a better name and He has finished His work with faithfulness.

*The things which are most surely believed among us.* Jesus Christ came to earth the first time and He is coming again. However, surrounding this first coming there are some things that we want to note. Let us go to Luke 1:1 where we pick up our title (our thought) for the message. The writer Luke was one who wanted to set some things in order. He wanted to write some things down clearly so we can understand. As he was inspired by God to write. He says in verses 1–4, “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, (2) Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; (3) It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, (4) That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.” We can be instructed

by these writings as well. These are things which are most surely believed among us and things which will have eternal endurance.

*Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.* In 1 John 4:2, 3 the writer says, “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: (3) And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” Is this thing of Santa Claus trying to sidetrack the people of God, or the people of the earth from understanding Jesus Christ and that He has come in the flesh? One of the things that is most surely believed among us is that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. If we do not believe that we are not of God. Those who are not supporting that truth are antichrists and are not of God. 1 John 5:1 says, “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”

John 1:18 says, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath

declared him.” Catch that point. “He hath declared him.” Who has declared God? Jesus Christ has declared God. The record that we have of the words of Christ in the Gospels is a declaration that comes to us from God. Why did God see fit to record some of these things around the birth of Christ? There are some very simple statements, but they are profound, and they are necessary for us to consider.

John 1:14 says, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” What does this say? Without doing violence to Scripture we can understand very clearly that Jesus was made flesh. He came in the flesh. The Word was made flesh. Verses 1 and 2 say, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) The same was in the beginning with God.” The Scripture speaks of Jesus as being that “true Light” (verse 9) and the Word here in this portion.

In Acts 1:2, 3 we have Luke also writing here in the book of Acts, “Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

(3) To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” These “infallible proofs” speak of things and facts that after Jesus was crucified, put in a grave and risen again that He was seen of the disciples, and there are infallible proofs of His resurrection, His ascension, and of things which He taught them concerning the kingdom of God. We will not focus on those. Those you may look up and study as well. I would like to focus around some facts of His coming — when He first came to earth.

Over the generations of time, from the time of beginning of time, there was a promise of a Redeemer. In the book of Genesis already after the fall of Adam and Eve we have that promise clearly coming through that there will be one to redeem. In every generation, I believe, they were looking for the Messiah. In every generation there was a constant watch — “Is this Christ? Is Christ coming? Is this the way that Christ will come?” We are on the other side of this after Christ has come. It is recorded through the inspiration of God, through those who have written the Word. Today we look

back at these accounts which God has seen fit to give us, and we have an insight into the coming of Christ to earth.

We will start with the first one in John 1:17. We see in this verse something that we need to understand as a message from God about the coming of His Son to earth. The children of Israel heard the Law given at Mount Sinai. They heard it rehearsed at Mount Horeb. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." God has a message for us from heaven today, surrounding the coming of Jesus as a baby into this earth, of grace and truth from heaven.

I would like to use my first two points as 1) *grace* and then, 2) *truth*. What is grace? What does that mean to us today? The grace of God is very deep. The grace of God is unmerited favour of God to us. What is that? What does grace mean to us? What do you think, or understand when you are in the valley of sorrow, in the valley of trial, or when you going through a fiery trial and the grace of God is sufficient to carry you through. What is that? What does that mean to you?

Let us look at Luke 2:40. I would like to take you to a couple of verses about grace. The Scripture says here, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in

spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." What is it saying? It says that the grace of God was with Him. The grace of God can be with you. God wants to bestow His grace upon you. What is it? 2 Corinthians 8:9 says, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Oh, do you know? "For ye know," he says. "Do you know? Do you understand the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ?" — though He was the very Son of God, He was divine, and that He came as a baby in the greatest of humility. For our sakes "though he was rich, yet . . . he became poor, that . . . through his poverty. . ." we could be rich. The grace of God given to man through Jesus His Son.

In 2 Corinthians 12:9 Paul writes this about grace, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Are you making the connection? The grace of God involves the power of Christ. It involves the goodness of God being bestowed upon humanity through Jesus Christ and a power

which is beyond pills, and all earthly power such that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

One more thought about grace yet in 2 Timothy 2:1 “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” I cannot completely explain to you what grace is. Study into it deeper. Follow into the goodness of God that is bestowed upon humanity in giving us grace through Jesus Christ.

2) *Truth*. The message that God wants us to receive from heaven is not deception. It is not the Santa Claus business, but truth. It is truth that endures throughout eternity. Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). We cannot serve, come to God, or worship God except “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). God does not accept deception. God does not accept false worship. God needs to be worshipped “in spirit and in truth,” only.

In John 18:37 Jesus had something to tell Pilate. Pilate was asking some hard questions. “Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness

unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” Do we understand the last statement? If we are of the truth and if we are worshipping in truth, we are hearing the words of Jesus. We are open to the things that He has taught.

3) *Christ came to save us from our sins*. We find this in Matthew 1:21. Before Jesus was born this message came through from God on high. “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” The message that God wants to share with us from heaven about Christ’s first coming into earth as a baby is not a manger scene. It is not Santa Claus. It is a message of one who is coming to save people from their sins. It is the forgiveness of sins. The message from heaven is that God has provided a way in which His people can be saved from sin. There is the blessedness of the forgiveness of sin. Do we understand the blessedness of that?

As you read Psalm 32:1, 2 you can hear David speaking these words. He says, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. (2) Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” David’s heart was

blessed. His heart was overflowing with joy at the blessedness of having his sin forgiven — his transgression forgiven — his sin covered. The message surrounding the coming of Christ is that “he shall save his people from their sins.” In Romans 4:7–12 you see that we can follow the steps of faith of Abraham. Connect that with the forgiveness of sins. It is a blessed portion there.

4) *God wants to be with His people.* In Matthew 1:23 we read, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” God desires to dwell with His people. Jesus says in Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” In Matthew 28:20 what does Jesus say? It is some of the last words that He said while here on earth. He said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” This promise will affect each of our children, no matter how long time lasts.

5) God reveals that we need to worship Christ the King. In Matthew 2:1, 2, God saw fit to have an account left on record about the wise men. There is a message coming through to us

from heaven in relation to this scene. “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, (2) Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.” What? God was revealing Himself through a star — through nature. These wise men saw a star in the east that was different. They wanted to come and worship Him. Do we have the message from heaven to worship this King who has come as a babe in greatest humility?

Luke 24:51, 52 gives the account of Jesus as He was ascending. He blessed His disciples “and they worshipped Him.” The two connect. The two flow together. As we worship, God blesses. If want the blessing of the Lord, we need to worship. They go hand in hand. In Revelation 5:6–10 we have the scene of Christ shown as the Lamb who is worthy, “and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (verse 9).

6) *God’s Son would be the greatest.* In Luke 1:32 we read, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest:

and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.” God wanted a message clearly understood in His Son, that He would be the greatest. Isaiah 53:12 says, “Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” In Matthew 12:6 Jesus Himself teaches the people “That in this place is one greater than the temple” — “A greater than Solomon is here” (Matthew 12:42). In Philippians 2:9, 10 Paul says, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: (10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.” Every knee shall bow to that name. There is no name greater than the name of Jesus.

7) *God established a kingdom that will have no end.* Luke 1:33 says, “And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” God wanted the people (and you and I as we would look into His Word) to understand that surrounding the birth of His Son

here is a kingdom that is being established that shall have no end. Jesus says, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight” (John 18:36). “Behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21), and it is without end. The soul of man never dies. As the Holy Spirit indwells the believer’s heart, it is part of a kingdom that has no end. In Isaiah 9:7 the prophecy comes through “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.” Daniel 2:4 says “shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.” Daniel 7:13, 14 speaks of “a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion.” Again, it is one that will never end.

In 2 Peter 1:11, 12 Peter writes about this kingdom that has no end. He brings it down to earth to us today in the Church of Jesus Christ. “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2) Wherefore I will not

be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.” Have you found the Door? Have you gone through the Door of Jesus Christ and found that entrance into that everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Do you understand that it is the Church of Jesus Christ.

Listen to these words now in Revelation 11:15. “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” Of His kingdom there shall be no end. This is the message from heaven that was clearly given surrounding the coming of Christ to this earth.

8) *To give knowledge of salvation.* In Luke 1:77, God wanted a message clearly understood in the coming of Christ — a very important message. “To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.” The message coming from heaven surrounding the birth of Christ as a baby involves God’s desire that people would have knowledge of this salvation that He is providing for them. Jesus clearly comes through and says,

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; (32) And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31, 32). Note that in all these verses, the knowledge of salvation is for all mankind. However, it is on the condition — “If ye continue.”

In John 7:16, 17 Jesus again says, “Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. (17) If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” The message of salvation is conditional. It is a knowledge that is given to all humanity on the condition “if.” Hosea 6:3 says “if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” Jeremiah 9:24 says, “But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.” That is all revealed and unveiled in Jesus Christ — in the coming of Christ. Jesus said in His high priestly prayer in John 17:3 that “life eternal,” is part of salvation. Life

eternal is in knowing and believing in Jesus Christ.

9) *God gives light.* In Luke 1:79, the message from heaven is to give light — “To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” As we consider the birth of Christ, what do we think? Do we understand that the message from heaven in His coming is to give light to me and to put light on my pathway so that He can guide my feet into the way of peace? It is not in thinking that I will be good so that next year Santa Claus will give me a gift. No. The conflict between Santa Claus and Jesus in my mind is nothing. However, had I been taught all my life that Santa Claus was so great, possibly the conflict would be something. Praise the Lord for the victory in Christ Jesus, for His provisions, for His light, for His giving us the light. He is “the light of the world” (John 8:12, 9:5).

John 1:4 says, “In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” John 8:12 says, “I am the light of the world,” fulfilling the message from heaven surrounding His coming as a baby. Let us turn to 2 Corinthians 4:6, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the

light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Do we understand that verse? Do we see what God wants us to know about Christ? That is, if we are accepting Jesus and believing in Him as His child. “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels” (verse 7). The Holy Spirit can indwell each of the children of God. Ephesians 5:14 says, “Christ shall give thee light.”

In Revelation 21:23, finally we see that there is “no need of the sun,” in heaven. Why? The Scripture says because “the Lamb is the light thereof.” Jesus is the light of the world. He is the Light to help us to find salvation. He is the Door into the glories of heaven. He is the door for our salvation, and He is the Light which is an eternal light.

10) *God is to be glorified.* This is the last message that I would like to look at. I am sure you could find some more. I would like to look at Luke 2:14 yet in closing. Surrounding the birth of Christ, God unveils a message from heaven like this. Here we see a scene that God saw fit to record. As we read, find comfort, and as we meditate on the Scriptures, we see that there were some shepherds living in the time of Jesus coming to earth as a baby. God unveils a message

from heaven through this scene. Let us read verses 8–15, “And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (9) And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. (10) And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. (11) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (12) And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. (13) And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, (14) Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (15) And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.”

Why is this left on record for us? What is the message that God from heaven wants us to understand in this scene, in this account? God is to be glorified. The very Son, His only begotten

Son had been sent to earth as a baby for a purpose — for the good of humanity. Christ came so that on earth there could be peace and good will toward men, but why is all this fighting? Why is there so much strife? God has provided the message from heaven that we would know that there is peace if we continue in the Word — if we “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 16:31). If, we make a choice to be among those who are “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

We realize that many travel. Psalm 4:8 says, “Thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.” Whether we travel, whether we are in our homes, we find that God has promised us peace as we trust in Him, and that safety is only in Him. Romans 8:6 says, “to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” If we want to know the God of peace, and be part of those who are peace makers, we need to be spiritually minded. We need to be born again to have this life and peace. In Romans 14:17 Paul writes clearly that the kingdom of God (this kingdom that has no end) this everlasting kingdom, is a kingdom that “is not meat and drink.” It is not merely something that goes on that we eat and we drink and we

have communion and we live from day to day. This kingdom of God that is without end is “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Today, each of us will choose if we will be a part of that kingdom.

In closing I would like to read to some verses from 2 John where John has a burden that we would not lose that reward. The choice is ours. I can either receive these messages from heaven and believe in them, or I can turn away and go my own way. God will give me the opportunity to choose. However, John says in 2 John 6–10 “And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. (7) For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

(8) Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. (9) Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.” Look to yourselves he says, “that we lose not those things which we have wrought,” that we lose not that “full reward.” How much clearer can we get it than that. There are many deceivers out there. Santa Claus is a deceiver and all who promote him. Christ is truth. He is light. He is the way of truth and He will lead us. Finally, His kingdom has no end. Those who find eternal life, find eternity with him without being deceived or grieved at that choice. The choice is ours? Look to yourselves that you lose not this reward.

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### The Biblical View of Divorce & Remarriage

From a message by the late Mark Carpenter

Sunday, February 02, 1997

Centerville Mennonite Church

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“We preserve the faith for the future generations — not by compromise, but by sacrifice and by willing, full obedience. By giving ourselves to the reading

and studying of the Holy Scriptures, and through prayer, we can make the proper application to the principles of the Holy Scriptures. We should permit

nothing to prevent us from maintaining the highest standard of Christian life that has been defended by the teaching of our Mennonite people through their whole history.” —

“Anabaptist history is not so much in script as it is in the life

and practice of every generation since the sixteenth century. Every generation must rewrite its own history. How close is our Anabaptist vision to Anabaptist reality? We are writing a history today for the next generation to accept or reject.”

## **Book Reprint** (Continued) **One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study**

### LESSON 16.

## **The Crucifixion.**

[Read Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19.]

I. Christ delivered “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” — Acts 2:23.

II. The combination of circumstances that made the event possible.

1. A traitor among the disciples of Jesus. — Mark 14:10, 11.
2. Christ’s refusal to defend Himself. — Matthew 26:53; John 18:36.
3. The completion of His work. — John 17:4.
4. The bitter enmity of the Jews. — Matthew 27:18; Luke 23:5.
5. The weakness of the Roman governor. — Matthew 27:19–26; Luke 23:13–25.

III. Charges against Jesus.

1. Blasphemy. — Matthew 26:65; John 19:7.
2. Treason. — Luke 23:2; John 19:12.

IV. The verdict. — Luke 23:14, 15.

V. Why He was delivered to the Jews. — Mark 15:15; John 19:12–16.

VI. Time. — Nisan 14, A. D. 29, from the third to the ninth hour of the day.

VII. Place. — Golgotha or Calvary.

VIII. Events that transpired while Jesus was on the cross.

1. Watched by the soldiers.
2. Superscription raised over Him.
3. Crucifixion of two thieves, one on His right and one on His left.
4. Parting His garments and casting lots for His vesture.
5. Reviled by chief priests, scribes, elders, thieves, and passers-by.
6. An offer of wine, mingled with myrrh, refused.
7. Darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour.
8. Salvation of the thief on the cross.
9. A sponge filled with vinegar held to Jesus' mouth.
10. Acts of sympathy from devoted women.
11. Jesus commended His mother to the care of the apostle John.
12. The vail of the temple rent from top to bottom.
13. The earth quaked and rocks rent.
14. Opening of graves, etc.
15. The centurion's confession.
16. Piercing of Jesus' side.
17. The body of Jesus begged of Pilate by Joseph of Arimathea.
18. The body taken down and delivered to Joseph and Nicodemus, who lay it in Joseph's tomb.

IX. Words of Jesus while on the cross.

1. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.
2. Woman, behold thy son. . . . Behold thy mother.
3. To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.
4. I thirst.
5. My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?
6. It is finished.
7. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

X. How the Crucifixion affected —

1. Pilate's wife. — Matthew 27:19.
2. The thief on the cross. — Luke 23:43.
3. The centurion. — Matthew 27:54.
4. Other witnesses. — Luke 23:48.
5. The earth. — Matthew 27:51, 52.
6. The sun. — Luke 23:44, 45.
7. The grave. — Matthew 27: 52, 53.
8. The believer. — John 3:16.
9. The redeemed. — Hebrews 10:14

NOTE.— If the events of each day of Christ's life were as fully recorded as those of the day of crucifixion, it would require 425 volumes as large as the New Testament to *contain it all*.

1. Whose work was the greater Simon of Cyrene's or Joseph of Arimathea's?
2. Do we understand from the part that Nicodemus took in the burial of Jesus, that he was now openly a disciple of Jesus?
3. By whom was Jesus declared innocent?
4. Was Pilate innocent of the blood of Christ?
5. How was the Jews' prayer, "His blood be upon us," answered?

## LESSON 17.

# From the Grave to Glory

### I. The Resurrection.

1. The precaution of the chief priests and Pharisees — Matthew 27: 62–66.
2. The tomb opened. — Matthew 28:2–4.
3. Scene at the sepulchre. — Matthew 28:1–8. Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–12; John 20:1:10.
4. Facts made manifest by these events.
  - a. Human power vanishes at the least touch from God.
  - b. The unselfish devotion of women disciples.
  - c. The triumph of Christ over all opposition.
  - d. Women were the first to enter the sepulchre.
  - e. Women were the first at the grave to honor the Lord.
  - f. Peter was the first among the disciples to enter the sepulchre.
  - g. The disciples had not fully comprehended Christ's prophesies concerning His own resurrection.

- h. The manifestation of the glory of God brings fear to the natural man.
- i. The sorrow over the disappearance of the body of Jesus was turned into joy at the news of His resurrection.
- j. When God performs mighty deeds, Satan attempts to thwart the effects thereof by planting unbelief into the hearts of people.

## II. Forty days on earth.

1. Ten recorded appearances of Jesus between His resurrection and ascension.

- a. To Mary Magdalene. — John 20:14–17; Mark 16:9.
- b. To the other women. — Matthew 28:9.
- c. On the way to Emmaus. — Luke 24:13–31.
- d. To Peter. — Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15: 5.
- e. To ten disciples. — Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–23.
- f. To the eleven. — John 20:26–29.
- g. On the Sea of Galilee. — John 21:1–14.
- h. To more than five hundred brethren. — 1 Corinthians 15:6.
- i. To James. — 1 Corinthians 5:7.
- j. At the ascension. — Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1: 4–9.

NOTE. — Thomas said that he must see and feel before he would believe, but seeing convinced him.

2. Information contained in these records.
- a. The fact of His resurrection was clearly established in the hearts of His followers.
  - b. The Pharisees believed the facts, and bribed the soldiers to scatter false reports.
  - c. Thomas at first doubted, but believed and worshipped as soon as proof was furnished.
  - d. These facts clearly prove the sincerity of Thomas and the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.
  - e. The scriptures were more clearly opened to the disciples.
  - f. The power of Christ was further illustrated by the working of miracles.
  - g. The divinity of Christ was avowed by a declaration of His power.
  - h. Three things are included in the Great Commission.

- i. The Gospel to be preached to all the world.
- ii. Believers to be baptized in the name of the Trinity.
- iii. Obedience to all the commandments to be taught.
- i. The disciples were to wait at Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Father.
- j. Spiritual power is conferred by the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

### III. The Ascension.

- 1. Place. — Luke 24:50; Acts 1:12.
- 2. Manner of Christ's departure. — Acts 1:9.
- 3. Promise of His return. — Acts 1:10, 11.
- 4. Effect upon the disciples. — Luke 24:52, 53.

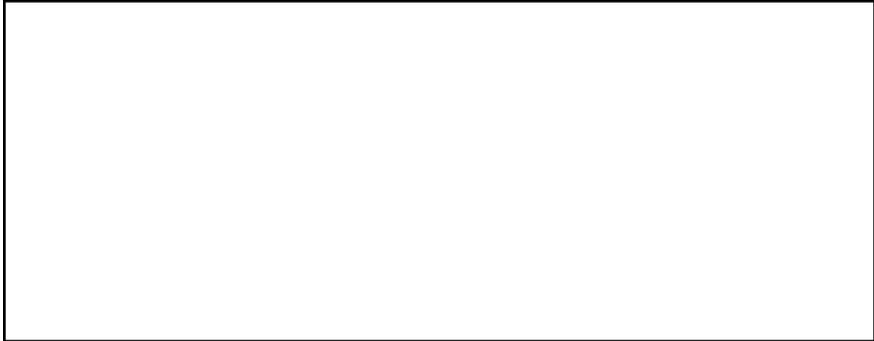
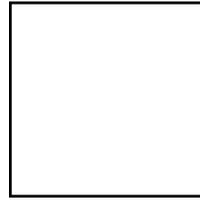
Christ is our way (John 14:6), (1) in life, (2) in death, (3) in resurrection, (4) in ascension. God has decreed that we must follow Him in death and in resurrection. If we willingly follow Him in life, we shall also have the privilege of following Him in ascension.

In Christ's appearance after His resurrection, let us not forget that He still acknowledges His disciples as "brethren."

- 1. How long was Jesus in the grave?
- 2. Give a description of a sepulchre as it existed in Christ's time.
- 3. Contrast the zeal of Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre with that of the disciples (John 20:10–12).
- 4. Why should Peter be especially acquainted with the fact of Christ's resurrection?
- 5. What miracle did Christ perform after His resurrection?

### **Providence & the Sovereignty of God**

- Fatalism Vs. the Sovereignty of God
- God's Providential Care
- Providence of God, The
- Recognizing Divine Providence
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