**Chapter 11**.

Chapter 11 describes the growth of the Church through the Gospel and also its growth even in the midst of persecution.

**Verses 1-3**: These verses describe the growth of the Church through the Gospel.

**Verses 4-10**: The Church grows through the Apostolic Witness (the Gospel) even while persecuted by the Antichrist (the beast[[1]](#footnote-1)1), the greatest battle of the Church before the end of the age.[[2]](#footnote-2)2

**Verses 11-13**: The Church triumphs over the Antichrist.

**Verses 14-19:** The Church Triumphant and Glorious.

Review and overview:

1. **The mighty angel** (**Revelation 10**): The Apostle St. John recalls that Jesus is the Powerful Angel of the Lord. He is carrying out the powerful work of the Gospel throughout the world, prevailing even though circumstances are difficult, just as He did for Israel in the exodus from Egypt.

2**. St. John the Apostle measures the Temple** (**Revelation 11:1-2**): The Temple is the Church, as it is in the latter half of the book of Ezekiel, and, like Ezekiel, St. John the Apostle measures the dimensions of the Church to show how large and expansive it becomes and how perfect (“fitly framed” the Apostle St. Paul writes) is its Righteousness is through the Gospel.[[3]](#footnote-3)3

3. **The Witnesses** (**Revelation 11:3-12**)**:** The witnesses are the Apostolic Office working powerfully to establish the Church and expanding it throughout the world by means of the Apostolic Office of the Gospel. It is the Apostolic Office along with the Prophetic Office that builds Ezekiel’s and St. John’s Temple.[[4]](#footnote-4)4 The Apostolic Office of the Gospel suffers persecution (e.g, fugitives in **Isaiah 66:19**[[5]](#footnote-5)5, the Sign causing the flight of Christians being the Apostolic Office of the Gospel[[6]](#footnote-6)6), especially against the Antichrist, the beast emerging from the pit, but is not overcome but prevails to continue its work while suffering persecution. “And they [the Witnesses] heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.” **verse 12**. This section on the establishing the Church by the Apostles also helps to provide a nice segue to Chapter 12 of Revelation which is about the Church.

**4. The Final Woe** **(13-18)**: The end of the world. The final judgment of the world comes with the completion of the work of the Gospel.

**5. The Church Triumphant (19)**: While the world perishes on the Last Day, the Church is Triumphant in Glory.

*1. And there was given me a reed*[[7]](#footnote-7)7 *like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein*.

**A. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod**: This passage is reminiscent of the description of the New Testament Church in the latter part of the book of Ezekiel (**Ezekiel Chapters 40-48**). “The remaining chapters of Ezekiel’s prophecy give an ideal picture of the spiritual temple of the Lord, of His Church of the New Testament, of His gloriosus kingdom. It was a wonderful vision which was vouchsafed to the prophet, its beauty being enhanced by the descriptive details. As in the case of every parable, however, it would manifestly be a mistake to stress every point of the parallelism. The exposition, therefore, deals with the larger outlines of the picture only. The ideal temple as here pictured exhibits, under Old Testament forms, which are used as being familiar to the men whom Ezekiel was addressing, the essential character of the Church of Christ and of the worship of Messiah as it would be when He would exercise His rule among His own people, among the believers in every part of the earth.”[[8]](#footnote-8)8

In this passage the Apostle St. John measures the Temple. In the Book of Ezekiel Jesus measures the Temple. “V. 3. **And He [God] brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man**, a heavenly being in the form and appearance of a man, **whose appearance was like the appearance of brass**[[9]](#footnote-9)9**,** bright, shining, resplendent, as befitted this singular Angel of Jehovah, Rev. 1, 151[[10]](#footnote-10)0, **with a line of flax in His hand**, used for the purpose of measuring the site, **and a measuring-reed**, more particularly for the masonry; **and He stood in the gate**, as though awaiting the newcomer. V.4. **And the Man said unto me**, by virtue of His own authority, which is equal to that of God Himself ... .”1[[11]](#footnote-11)1

**1.** **Jesus meticulously measures the Temple and finds it flawless because the Temple, i.e., the New Testament Church, bears by the Gospel through faith His Righteousness for us**: Throughout Chapters 40-42 Jesus meticulously measures His Temple (Church). This meticulous measuring shows how carefully Jesus crafts our righteousness and the righteousness of all men to make men acceptable to God once again and save. Jesus takes care of every part of the Worship born of the Gospel, namely, the Remission of sins1[[12]](#footnote-12)2, to make sure that it is pure, holy, and beneficial to men, nothing left unattended and cared for, so that by the Gospel through faith men are perfect before God in every detail, great, small, majestic, or minuscule, 24/7, now and forever. Far from the slander of license to sin, this passage from Ezekiel vividly shows how meticulously righteous and holy Absolution is. David writes of Jesus exacting righteousness and holy perfection for the sake of sinners in the Messianic Psalm **Psalm 24**1[[13]](#footnote-13)3:

Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This *is* the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.1[[14]](#footnote-14)4

Likewise, the prophet Micah writes of Christ’s pure holiness when he prophesies that Christ would refine the sons of Levi (the Public Ministers of the Gospel under Moses) when He would appear:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.1[[15]](#footnote-15)5

The Apostle St. Paul writes:

*It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.1[[16]](#footnote-16)6

The intensive measuring recorded in the prophet Ezekiel, chapters 40-42, reveals how perfect and exacting in every minute detail the Righteousness of Absolution, i.e., the Gospel1[[17]](#footnote-17)7, is. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

... Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.1[[18]](#footnote-18)8

**2. Jesus measures the enormity of the outer court**: The outer court, namely, the court of the Gentiles, measures 500 reeds (6 cubits1[[19]](#footnote-19)9 or 9 feet). 500 reeds equals 0.85 miles. The Court of the Gentiles is nearly a mile square. While the Temple has not changed because the Saving Gospel doesn’t change2[[20]](#footnote-20)0, the vast expanse of the Court of the Gentiles shows the growth of the Church through the Gentile world through the Gospel. “The vast extent of the area of this singular Temple is a feature which clearly marks its ideal character. ‘It symbolizes the great enlargement of the kingdom of God, when Jehovah-Messiah shall reign to the ends of the earth.’”2[[21]](#footnote-21)1

**Reminder**: When we see changes in Christ, e.g., the growth of the Temple or the Church (Christ’s mystical body) it is according to His humanity, including His humanity that is His spiritual body (the mystical union), the Church. The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes:

Gerhard had weighed a number of interpretations, and his reasoning shows that he was well acquainted with the linguistic usage of Scripture: “Scripture ascribes to Christ a twofold body, a personal one, which was assumed into the Person of the Logos, and a spiritual, or mystical, one, which is united with Him by the bond of His Spirit, the members of which body are all true believers. The Apostle is really speaking of this mystical body when he says that Christ is to be subjected to His Father in the Last Day.”2[[22]](#footnote-22)2 ... Because the Church is united with Christ in one mystical body, the Church is directly called Christ ... in 1 Cor. 12:12, and, speaking of Christ in the same relation, 1 Cor. 3:23 says: “Christ is God’s.”2[[23]](#footnote-23)3

In the Magnificat the Virgin St. Mary similarly speaks of the Lord being “magnified”, namely, made great by the growth of His Church. The Lutheran Church confesses:

For they first say this, namely, that *the name of the Lord will be great*. This is accomplished by the preaching of the Gospel. For through this the name of Christ is made known, and the mercy of the Father, promised in Christ is recognized. The preaching of the Gospel produces faith in those who receive the Gospel. They call upon God, they give thanks to God, they bear afflictions for their confession, they produce good works for the glory of Christ. Thus the name of the Lord becomes great among the Gentiles.2[[24]](#footnote-24)4

**B. and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.**

Here we have it again, as ever and always: **Church and Ministry**. The Temple of God is comprised of the Gospel Ministry (the Altar2[[25]](#footnote-25)5) and the Church (the Temple) created by the Gospel Ministry. The Apostle St. Paul writes of the Church and Ministry nature of God’s Temple:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.2[[26]](#footnote-26)6

Notice the Apostle St. Paul writes that the Church is “fitly-framed together,” reflecting again the exacting and precise Righteousness of the Gospel pointed out by the prophet Ezekiel in chapters 40-42.

**The Gospel Ministry**: The Foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*, is the Foundation of the Church, namely, the Assembly of Believers. The Lutheran Church confesses:

“In all these passages Peter is the representative of the entire assembly of apostles [and does not speak for himself alone, but for all the apostles], as appears from the text itself. For Christ ask not Peter alone, but says: *Whom do ye say that I am?* And what is here said [to Peter alone] in the singular number: *I will give unto thee the keys; and whatsoever thou shalt bind*, etc., is elsewhere expressed [to their entire number], in the plural Matt. 18, 18: *Whatsoever ye shall bind* etc. And in John 20, 23: *Whosesoever sins ye remit*, etc. These words testify that the keys are given alike to all the apostles, and that all the apostles are alike sent forth [to preach]. ... Therefore it is necessary that in these passages Peter is the representative of the entire assembly of the apostles, and for this reason they do not accord to Peter any prerogative, aor superiority, or lordship [which he had, or was to have had, in preference to the other apostles]. ... However, as to the declaration: *Upon this rock I will build My Church*, certainly the Church has not been built upon the authority of man, but upon the ministry of the confession which Peter made, in which he proclaims that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He accordingly addresses him as a minister: *Upon this rock*, i.e. upon this ministry [Therefore he addresses him as a minister of this office in which this concession and doctrine is to be in operation, and says: *Upon this rock, i.e.,* this preaching ministry.]” *The Smalcald Articles:* **Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope**.23, 24, 25, *Triglotta*, p. 511.

**The Church** (created by the Gospel Ministry2[[27]](#footnote-27)7): Fellowcitizens of the household of God built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

The Lutheran Church confesses that the Gospel Ministry creates the Church, namely, the Whole Assembly of Believers through the Gospel:

That we may obtain this faith, *the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted*. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith, where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ’s sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ’s sake.2[[28]](#footnote-28)8

*Of the Use of the Sacraments* they teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession2[[29]](#footnote-29)9 among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them.3[[30]](#footnote-30)0

Although *the Church* properly is the congregation of saints and true believers, nevertheless, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled therewith, it is lawful to use Sacraments administered by evil men, according to the saying of Christ: *The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat*, etc. Matt. 23, 2. Both the Sacraments and Word are effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, notwithstanding they be administered by evil men.3[[31]](#footnote-31)1

As we have seen, Church and Ministry constitutes the very core (heart) of the life of the Church, defining its very existence. For this reason, the Lutheran Reformation was a big deal because it restored the pure teaching of Church and Ministry, which is the lifeblood of the Church. The Rev. Dr. C. F. W. Walther writes on Church and Ministry being the core that constitutes God’s Church:

We are also convinced of the fact that the great decisive battle of the Reformation, which our church fought against the papacy in the 16th century, centered in the doctrines of the church and the ministry, which have now again been called into question, and that the pure and clear teaching concerning them constitutes the precious spoils that our church gained from this warfare.3[[32]](#footnote-32)2

*2. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty* and *two months*.

**A. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not... .**

The court of the Gentiles is left out because there is now no distinction in the Church. The Church is one, Jew and Gentile, through the Gospel. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism.3[[33]](#footnote-33)3

Again, the Apostle St. Paul writes that in the New Testament there is One Church, Jew and Gentile, under the Gospel:

Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and that broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.3[[34]](#footnote-34)4

Again, the Apostle St. Paul writes that there is one Church made up of Jews and Gentile in the New Testament under the Gospel:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promsie.3[[35]](#footnote-35)5

**B. for it [the outer court] is given unto the Gentiles.**

Now there is one Church of Jew and Gentiles under Christ’s Word and Sacraments, there is no need for an outer court, the Court of the Gentiles. The Gentiles in this outer court in **Revelation**is the world, the realm of unbelievers, whether Jew or Gentile. The Evangelist St. Luke writes:

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.3[[36]](#footnote-36)6

A true Jew has the faith of Abraham not just descendants according to the flesh, as the Apostle St. Paul has noted in **Galatians 3:28** above. St. John the Baptist stated that children of Abraham are his children according to faith and not according to the flesh alone:

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.3[[37]](#footnote-37)7

Notice also the “axe is laid unto the root”. St. John the Baptist indicating the end of Judah and Jerusalem through unbelief. Jerusalem and the nation of Israel ceased to exist in AD 70. Rabbi Chaim Potok writes of the post-destruction days of Jerusalem:

All through the decades of the Flavian dynasty, whose great pride had been the destruction of Jerusalem and the crushing of the Jewish rebellion, the sages of Yavneh reshaped the nature of the Jewish tradition, cutting it loose from dependence upon the Jerusalem temple and the sacrificial system. In the time of Rabban Gamaliel the text of obligatory and communal prayers was fixed. The canonization of the last of the Biblical books may have been accomplished during this period. Christians were taken to be a heretical sect, and contact with them was forbidden. It was declared that Passover could be celebrated without the sacrifice of the paschal lamb. The order, *seder*, of the Passover eve ritual was transformed; one could eat the unleavened bread and bitter herbs without the meat of the lamb -- contrary to the clear stipulation of the Bible. A new text was developed to explain and accompany the Passover evening rituals. That text is called the Haggadah. The Passover molded at Yavneh out of the debris of the destroyed temple is still celebrated by Jews today.3[[38]](#footnote-38)8

The people clearly confessed they departed from the faith of Moses.3[[39]](#footnote-39)9 Hence, they ceased to be Jews or Israelites according to Scripture and, therefore, became a part of the Gentiles. Jerusalem is forever trodden under foot by the Gentiles because the Jerusalem of Moses, David, and the prophets, namely, the faith of Abraham, is gone. The unbelieving Jews that emerged from the end of Jerusalem were, as it were, Gentiles in effect because of their unbelief living in the midst of the Jews, as St. John the Baptist stated. So, whether they calls themselves Jews or not, they are not the Jews or Israelites of Moses and the prophets and, therefore, are Gentiles treading Jerusalem under foot. This treading under foot will go on for 42 months, namely, three and one half years, which is the New Testament era, the latter half of human history.

*3. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred* and *threescore days, clothed in sackcloth*.

**A. And I will give power unto my two witnesses**:

(1) **Power:** This Power is the Power of the God unto Salvation in the Preaching of the Gospel. The Evangelist St. Luke writes:

And he [Jesus] said unto them, ... But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.4[[40]](#footnote-40)0

The Apostle St. Paul writes:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.4[[41]](#footnote-41)1

(2) **Witnesses:** The witnesses is the Apostolic Office of the Public Preaching of the Gospel. As seen already from **Acts 1:8**, the Apostolic Office is comprised of Christ’s witnesses. Also, Jesus says this elsewhere. The Evangelist St. Luke writes:

And [Jesus] said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.4[[42]](#footnote-42)2

Again, the Evangelist St. Luke writes:

For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.4[[43]](#footnote-43)3 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.4[[44]](#footnote-44)4

Bishoprick means the office of oversight4[[45]](#footnote-45)5 and would, therefore, refer to the Public Office of the Ministry. Martin Chemnitz, the “Second Martin4[[46]](#footnote-46)6” of the Reformation, writes:

The apostles accommodated these words more willingly to the ecclesiastical ministry because they were at that time generally known from the Greek version of the Old Testament4[[47]](#footnote-47)7. For the [Hebrew] words *paqad, pequdah*, and *pequdim*, which mean visitation, inspection, office, care, administration committed to someone, a duty demanded -- these the Greeks translated *episkopein* [to oversee], *episkopee* [the office of oversight], and *episkopos* [overseer]. In Num. 31:14 the officers of the army are called *episkopoi*; in Judges 9:28 ... Abimelech had Zabul as his *episkopos*. 2 Kings 11:15 speaks of the captains who are *episkopoi* over all the army. There also guards were placed over the house of the Lord [2 Kings 11:7]. This is explained thus by the Greeks: He placed *episkopos* over the house of the Lord. In 2 Chron. 39:12 the inspectors of works are called *episkopoi*. Thus in Ps. 109:8 the office of Judas is called *episcopee*. I have noted down these examples which I had observed, in order that consideration might be given to the source from which the apostles took this term, the peculiar emphasis of which can also be gathered and understood from these passages. Jerome4[[48]](#footnote-48)8 translated it *superattendens* (superintendent), Ambrose4[[49]](#footnote-49)9 *superinspector* (overseer).5[[50]](#footnote-50)0

The Public Ministry is articulated both in the Old and New Testaments as is seen from **Psalm 109:8** and the Apostle St. Peter’s citing of it in **Acts 1:20**. In addition, note that the Office of Apostle required someone to be a witness of all that Jesus had said and done: “Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.” **Acts 1:21-22**.

Two witnesses refers to the Public Office of the Ministry, which requires two or three to be present in order to constitute a public. The Apostle St. Matthew writes:

And [Jesus] said, ... For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.5[[51]](#footnote-51)1

The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard writes:

It is better taken in a general way to refer to the faithful teachers and confessors of the Church (Isa.55:4; Luke 24:48; acts 1:8, 10:39; Rev. 1:5, 2:13, 3:14) who oppose the Antichrist and exposes his false doctrine and tyranny; who succeed one another in a continual series. God raised up some of them in the midst of the Antichrist’s tyranny and persecution so that they might deliver a public testimony to the truth.5[[52]](#footnote-52)2

Witnesses refers not to persons but to the Public Office of the Ministry. Even though the Office suffers persecution, the work nevertheless remains and goes on as many rise up to assume the Office (officers5[[53]](#footnote-53)3) vacated by others because of persecution.5[[54]](#footnote-54)4 As Nazi resistance leader in the movie *Casablanca* Victor Laszlo replied to the Nazi Major, “And what if you track down these men and killed them. What if you murdered all of us? From every corner of Europe hundreds, thousands would rise to take our places. Even Nazis can't kill that fast.” In other words, even though Laszlo might be stopped, the cause would go on because hundreds, thousands, would take his place.

**C**. **and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth:**

(1) **and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days**: This number of days is another expression for the time of the New Testament era. It constitutes 3½ years5[[55]](#footnote-55)5, which is one half of the Divine number of 7 and constitutes that second half of human history.5[[56]](#footnote-56)6 The Gospel shall be preached throughout the world from the time of Christ until the end of the age. The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes:

Holy Scripture is very explicit in teaching that the present world exists, by virtue of God’s express will and providence, for the sole purpose that the Gospel of Christ, the message of God’s gracious forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ’s vicarious satisfaction, may be proclaimed in it. In Matt. 24,14 Christ tells us this very clearly and emphatically; He engraves it, as it were, upon brass and granite by declaring: “This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come,” namely, the end of the world. God has indeed purchased mankind at a great cost. With the blood of Jesus Christ, His incarnate Son, He has paid the price for sinful man’s eternal salvation, and now He permits the world to stand in order that in it the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ may be proclaimed and that this Gospel-message may be accepted by men through faith.5[[57]](#footnote-57)7

(2) **clothed in sackcloth:** The Witnesses, which are the Preaching of the Gospel, are clothed in sackcloth because of the Church is under the Cross because of the persecution of the world for preaching the Gospel.5[[58]](#footnote-58)8 Jesus says in the Gospel according to the Apostle St. John:

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.5[[59]](#footnote-59)9

The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes:

“The world hath not the grace,” says Luther, to appreciate and reward the good works of Christians, e.g., their preaching of the Gospel in the world, their prayers, their intercessions. ... The world hates and persecutes Christians just because of their very best works. ... [For the preaching of the Gospel the Apostles were beaten, Acts 5:40; Rom. 8:36; I Cor. 4:13] But our gracious God makes up for that. He is so pleased with our good works that He rewards us richly for doing them.6[[60]](#footnote-60)0

*4. There are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.*

**A. Zechariah 4**: This passage is reminiscent of **Zechariah 4**. The prophet Zechariah6[[61]](#footnote-61)1 writes:

1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, 2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all *of* gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which *are* upon the top thereof: 3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right *side* of the bowl, and the other upon the left *side* thereof. 4 So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What *are* these, my lord? 5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. 6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. 7 Who *art* thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become* a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone *thereof with* shoutings, *crying*, Grace, grace unto it. 8 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. 10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* those seven; they *are* the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.6[[62]](#footnote-62)2

11 Then answered I, and said unto him, What *are* these two olive trees upon the right *side* of the candlestick and upon the left *side* thereof? 12 And I answered again, and said unto him, What *be these* two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden *oil* out of themselves? 13 And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these *be*? And I said, No, my lord. 14 Then said he, These *are* the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.6[[63]](#footnote-63)3

1. **And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all *of* gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which *are* upon the top thereof:**

**(a) Candlestick:** Candlestick is the Light of the Preaching of the Gospel (**St. Matthew 5:14-16**: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle , and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”)6[[64]](#footnote-64)4 Candlesticks and the Preaching Office appeared in the first chapter of **Revelation**. *“*13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.” **Revelation 1:13**. Christ dwells in His Church in the Word and the Sacraments. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” **St. Matthew 18:20**. Luther: “Christ came into the flesh to be with us in Baptism and at the Holy Supper.”6[[65]](#footnote-65)5

**(b)** **Seven Lamps**: The Preaching of the Saving Gospel is the Work of the Holy Spirit, namely, the The *Septiformis Spriritu* (the Sevenfold Spirit6[[66]](#footnote-66)6, namely, the Holy Spirit Himself and His Gifts of Christ’s Sanctification for us and for all men6[[67]](#footnote-67)7), who applies and gives to men by the Gospel through faith Christ’s Holy Life lived for us and for all men.

The Candlestick is the Word and the Olive Trees are the Anointing of the Holy Spirit. The Candlestick is the Public Administration in Israel of the Gospel: **A.** The Preaching of the Gospel itself (the priest Joshua), and **B**. the civil office which supports the Public Preaching of the Gospel in Israel. Zerubabbel6[[68]](#footnote-68)8, the governor, was the civil ruler, which office was governed by God’s Word, the Law of Moses, for the sake of the Gospel. Joshua6[[69]](#footnote-69)9, the priest, was the spiritual ruler through God’s Word. Both men are anointed with the Holy Spirit for the Service of the Gospel in Judah and, through Judah, the wider world.7[[70]](#footnote-70)0 “11 Then answered I, and said unto him, What *are* these two olive trees upon the right *side* of the candlestick and upon the left *side* thereof? 12 And I answered again, and said unto him, What *be these* two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden *oil* out of themselves? 13 And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these *be*? And I said, No, my lord. 14 Then said he, These *are* the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”7[[71]](#footnote-71)1

**(c)** **Not by might but by My Spirit**: God points out here that the main purpose of Judah’s preservation was for the sake of building His Church through the Gospel.7[[72]](#footnote-72)2 God always builds His Kingdom by His Spirit through the Word and the Sacraments. Physical elements always obtain here because Judah was a civil order under the Law of Moses. At the core, however, is always the Spiritual Kingdom of God the Holy Spirit by the Gospel through faith. “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” **Exodus 19:5-6**. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious a : but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light ... ." **I Peter 2:4-9**. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. " **Ephesians 2:19-22.**

**Back to Revelation 11:4:** *4. There are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.*

**B. There are the two olive trees**: As in the above passage from **Zechariah 4**, the olive tree indicates the anointing of God the Holy Spirit to Preach the Gospel in **Zechariah** and also does here.7[[73]](#footnote-73)3 The Apostle St. John writes of the Anointing of God the Holy Spirit in order to preach the Gospel:

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.7[[74]](#footnote-74)4

**C. and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth**: The two candlesticks in **Zechariah** were the Public Ministry of the Gospel and the civil (public) office that supported the Preaching of the Gospel in Judah. The Apostle St. Paul writes that the Public Ministry of the Gospel for the Salvation of Israel and the Gentiles was entrusted to Israel:

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.7[[75]](#footnote-75)5

The Lord uses the expression “two” in **Revelation** to indicate He is referring only to the Public Ministry of the Gospel, the civil (public) office falling away with the arrival of Christ.7[[76]](#footnote-76)6 not to persons but to the Public Ministry of the Gospel, which requires *two* or three to be established. The Apostle St. Matthew writes:

And [Jesus] said ... For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.7[[77]](#footnote-77)7

Just as with Zerubabbel and Joshua, the Preachers of the Gospel are the servants of the God of all creation.

*5. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed*.

**A. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth***,* **and devoureth their enemies:**

**(1) Hurting them:** This “hurt” refers to the opposition to the Office of the Preaching of the Gospel. The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes, “The most grievous of all sins is despising the Gospel of grace, of the *sola gratia* [grace alone]. In the Gospel of the *sola gratia* God reveals His innermost heart, His true will toward all mankind.”7[[78]](#footnote-78)8

**(2)**. **fire proceedeth out of their mouth***,* **and devoureth their enemies:** This refers to the preaching of repentance for despising the Gospel; it is the preaching of repentance in the narrow sense.7[[79]](#footnote-79)9

As in **Revelation 9:17**8[[80]](#footnote-80)0, which refers to Islam advancing its rule through preaching of the word of Islam8[[81]](#footnote-81)1, so here the Preaching of the Gospel uses the same figure to describe the preaching of repentance in the narrow sense through the Word of God vis a vis those who reject and oppose the Gospel.In the Prophet Jeremiah the Lord describes His Word, namely, the Word of Repentance in the narrow sense, as a consuming fire. “*Is* not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces?” **Jeremiah 23:29**.

*6. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, ad often as they will.*

**A. These have power to shut heaven**:The Apostle St. John refers here to the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, namely, the Gospel. “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” **St. Matthew 18:19**.8[[82]](#footnote-82)2Through the Gospel Christians are able to open heaven to sinners or close heaven to sinners. Christians open sinners to men when they Absolve them of their sins. Christians close heaven to sinners when the man insists and remaining in his sin and will not receive the Absolution. The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes:

[T]he "keys of the Kingdom of heaven" are nothing else, and can be nothing else, than the means of grace, the Gospel. Through the offer of the Gospel, and through nothing else, Christians remit sins and thus open heaven; through withholding the Gospel, they retain sins and thus lock heaven. Now, since the believers are the persons to whom Christ has entrusted the means of grace, they have...been given the keys of the kingdom of heaven.8[[83]](#footnote-83)3

**B. The Keys are dramatically portrayed**.

**(1)** **that it rain not in the days of their prophecy**: This passage reminds of the days of Elijah the prophet. “And Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* one of the inhabitants of Gilead, saith unto Ahab, *As* the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.” God’s Word closes up the rain of the heavens. So, also, as we’ve seen, God’s Word closes heave to sinners or opens them. The Apostle St. John dramatically, vividly and powerfully portrays the Power of the Keys to close and to open heaven to men by alluding to the days of the prophet Elijah and God closing the heavens and its blessing of rain.These passages powerfully the Power of the Office of the Keys. Once Reconciliation to God is closed, then, all blessings, both spiritual and physical, from God cease and are closed up.

God brought about these miraculous events in order to call people to repentance and defense of the Gospel because the people of Israel were entrusted with the Office of the Keys for themselves and for the entire world. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is* *there* of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. **Romans 3:1-2**.

**(2)** **and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues**: These passages are reminiscent of the plagues that scourged

Egypt.Moses smote the Nile River and it turned to blood. “Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD, behold, I will smite with the rod that *is* in mine hand upon the waters which *are* in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.” **Exodus 7:17**.

In this passage, Moses performs this miracle to show to Pharaoh that Christ is the God of the creation. On that basis alone Pharaoh should listen to Him. Christ proves to Pharaoh and the people of Israel that He in fact is the One True God and Creator because He rules of creation in His Kingdom of Power8[[84]](#footnote-84)4. The Church has the same Almighty God and Creator protecting it by the Gospel through faith. The Apostle St. Matthew writes:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen. **St. Matthew 28:18-20**.

**(3)**. **NB:** It is important to note that once heaven closes to men because of their unbelief and rejection of forgiveness, men lose all that other blessings of God. These passages remind us that all of God’s Blessings are lost through unbelief in the Gospel. Just as the Gospel opens heaven to men and all of heaven’s blessings, so the blessings of heaven disappear when men reject God’s Forgiveness and Reconciliation.

*7. And when they shall have finished* *their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them.*

**A. And when they shall have finished their testimony:** The completion of this work is the completion8[[85]](#footnote-85)5 of the reach of the Gospel to the ends of the earth as Jesus prophesied; it does not mean the preaching of the Gospel has come to a close because that would mean the end of the age. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth8[[86]](#footnote-86)6, and their words unto the ends of the world8[[87]](#footnote-87)7.

St. John Chysostom says in a sermon from around the end of the 4th century:

“But I say, Have they not heard?” What, he mans, if the preachers were sent, and did preach what they were bid, and these did not hear? Then comes a most perfectly reply to their objection. “Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”8[[88]](#footnote-88)8

The Witnesses, that is the preachers of the Gospel, which Gospel is the Public Witness of the Apostles8[[89]](#footnote-89)9, have finished their testimony in an intermediate sense because by the time the Apostle St. Paul writes the epistle of Romans the Gospel had completed its intermediate goal and traveled to the ends of the earth.

Because it has traveled to the ends of the earth does not mean it is believed to that extent. St. John Chrysostom says in a sermon from around the end of the 4th century:

For in proof that He [Jesus] meant this, and that before the taking of Jerusalem the gospel was preached, hear what Paul saith, “Their sound went into all the earth;” ... and again, “The gospel which was preached to every creature which is under Heaven.” ... And seest thou him running from Jerusalem unto Spain? And if one took so large a portion, consider what the rest also wrought. For writing to others also, Paul again saith concerning the gospel, that “it is bringing forth fruit, and growing up in every creature which is under Heaven.” ... But what meaneth, “For a witness to all nations?” Forasmuch as though it was everywhere preached, yet it was not everywhere believed. It was for a witness, he saith, to them that were disbelieving, that is, for conviction, for accusation, for a testimony; for they that believed will bear witness against them that believed not, and will condemn them. And for this cause, after the gospel is preached in every part of the world, Jerusalem is destroyed, that they may not have so much as a shadow of an excuse for their perverseness. For they that saw His power shine throughout every place, and in an instant take the world, what excuse could they then have for continuing in the same perverseness? For in proof that it was everywhere preached at that time, hear what Paul saith, “of the gospel which was preached to every creature which is under Heaven.” ... Which also is a very great sign of Christ’s power, that in twenty or at most thirty years the word had reached the ends of the world. “After this therefore,” saith He, shall come the end of Jerusalem.9[[90]](#footnote-90)0

The preaching of the Gospel to the end of the earth must occur before the end of the world. The Apostle St. Matthew writes:

And Jesus answered and said unto them, ... And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.9[[91]](#footnote-91)1

First the Gospel must be preached to the ends of the world. Finally, before the end of the age, the Antichrist manifests himself and is defeated. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come* [the Second Coming of Christ], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;9[[92]](#footnote-92)2 Who opposeth and exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what witholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of inquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let,* until he be taken out of the way.9[[93]](#footnote-93)3 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth9[[94]](#footnote-94)4, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.9[[95]](#footnote-95)5

Obviously, the singling out of the Papacy among all the antichrists indicates Scripture sees it as the greatest threat to the Church during the New Testament era, the final era of human history. Indeed, the Papacy marshaled the massive forces of the abyss (the fallen world) in a subtle attack on the Gospel and, therefore, the Church from within the Church.9[[96]](#footnote-96)6 It is subtle because it comes in the name of Christ but substitutes his own doctrine for Christ’s. An antichrist is a subtle opponent, not a crass opponent, of Christ, a wolf in sheep’s clothing, **St. Matthew 7 :15**.

The end of the Preaching of the Gospel is the end of the age. The Apostle St. Matthew writes:

And Jesus answered and said unto them, ... this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.9[[97]](#footnote-97)7

Before the end of the age the Antichrist will be revealed and conquered. After that time, the end of the age can come at any time. Luther sums up this position when he stated that the reading of the Augsburg Confession meant the world could end at any time because the last big event, the exposing and defeating of the Antichrist, had come to pass. The Rev. Dr. Friedrich Bente wriets:

J. T. Mueller says: “Luther called the Diet of Augsburg ‘the last trumpet before Judgment Day’; hence we may well call the confession there made the *blast* of the trumpet, which, indeed, has gone forth into all lands, even as the Gospel of God, which it proclaims in is purity.”9[[98]](#footnote-98)8

The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann writes:

We are involved here with that one in whom enmity against the Lord and his Anointed culminates in all its malevolence. Meant is that lone enemy of God and Christ, that foremost enemy to whom Old Testament prophecy otherwise points, also e.g. in Ps. 68, 21; 110, 6; Hab. 3, 13, the “anomos”, the man of sin, of whom Paul prophesies in 2 Thess. 2, 3ff. Him will Christ smite, judge, slay. But it is not Final Judgment that is prophesied here, when the Lord of Hosts will appear in his glorious majesty and his people’s enemy. Before this happens, and still before the end of the world, Christ will with the rod of his mouth and the breath of his lips smite and slay Antichrist and his hostile world. He will spiritually judge and annihilate him by his Word and Spirit. Thus also St. Paul in 2 Thess. 2, 8 distinguishes the slaying of Antichrist by the Word of Christ from the final complete destruction of the same at the Lord’s appearing.

This prophecy is now fulfilled. Christ, the Lord of the church, has by the Gospel which Luther proclaimed to the nations of earth spiritually judged and condemned Antichrist, revealed him before all the world as the arch-deceiver and arch-scoundrel and has thereby created release and help for his lowly, poor flock on earth. Yes, Christ already now, in this time, in various ways shows that he is the Lord who is governing his church. Righteousness and faithfulness, as the prophet adds, are the girdle of his loins. As the girdle holds clothing around the body, so Christ’s kingly rule is ordered and normed by righteousness and faithfulness. He applies his righteousness and faithfulness by restraining and warding off the enemies of his church and by mightily protecting and upholding strengthens his poor church.9[[99]](#footnote-99)9

**B. the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them:**

**(1)**. **The beast:** The beast is the Papacy. The Papacy is treated in more detail in **Revelation Chapter 13**. Scripture refers to the Papacy as a beast because it is an institution that is bereft of the teaching of the Image of God because of its denial of the Gospel.10[[100]](#footnote-100)0 Sin causes the loss of the Image of God. The Gospel restores the Image of God in men and life everlasting. Spurning the Gospel means to forsake the Image of God restored by the Gospel.

The Lord views men bereft of the Image of God as less than animals. In the prophet **Jeremiah** the Lord says:

Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.10[[101]](#footnote-101)1

The Gospel, however, restores the Image of God. Jesus prays in His High Priestly prayer on the Eve of His Passion:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.10[[102]](#footnote-102)2

Luther writes of the Saving Knowledge of God of the Gospel:

In these words [**St. John 17:3**] He expresses the form and formation of eternal life. ... For since He has said that He has the power to grant eternal life, someone now might ask, ‘In what does eternal life consist, or how does it happen that we receive it?’ he answers that by saying, “It happens in this way, and by this means or in this manner they shall receive it: that ye know You, who alone are the true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” ... Concerning this knowledge and its power the prophets have spoken gloriously and clearly prophesied, as in Isaiah 53[:11]: “By knowledge of Him shall He (My Servant, the Righteous One) make many just or righteous.” This means: “He will redeem them from sins and snatch them from the devil’s jaws solely through this; that they know Him and who He is.” ... Likewise, Jeremiah 9[:23-24] says: “Let no one boast of his wisdom nor of his might nor of his riches” – in short, let no one boast at all – “but if anyone wants to boast, let him boast in this, that he knows Me and knows who I am: the Lord, who does good and establishes righteousness and justice on earth.”10[[103]](#footnote-103)3

Man lost the Image of God in the beginning when he sinned against God. While Adam still knew the Holy Trinity, he no longer had the blessed knowledge of God by rather the dreadful knowledge of God induced by sin. Adam begat children not in the Image of God but in his own godless image (**Genesis 5:3**10[[104]](#footnote-104)4). Sadly, no longer in the birth of each child does God say the Blessed Words, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ... .” **Genesis 1:26**. The re-creation of man in God’s Image occurs only now through the Gospel. The Gospel restores the Image of God by restoring the blessed knowledge of God through Absolution and also that one knows who is Absolving him, namely, True, Triune God. The Papacy destroys the Image of God by denying Absolution while claiming to teach in the Name of the Holy Trinity. The Reformation vanquished the tyranny of the Papacy by restoring the Blessed Knowledge of God of the Free and Full Pardon of all sins for Christ’s Sake by the Gospel through faith.

**(2)a.**  **the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them**.

While the Gospel has completed it’s goal of going to the ends of the earth, it is not yet the end of the age because the Antichrist, i.e., the Papacy, has not yet been revealed and defeated. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come* [Christ’s second Advent]10[[105]](#footnote-105)5, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what witholdeth10[[106]](#footnote-106)6 that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let,* until he be taken out of the way.10[[107]](#footnote-107)7 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth10[[108]](#footnote-108)8, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.10[[109]](#footnote-109)9

**(2)b. the bottomless pit:** The bottomless pit is the unbelieving world. St. Augustine writes:

“And he cast him into the abyss”, -- *i.e.*, cast the devil into the abyss. By the *abyss* is meant the countless multitude of the wicked whose hearts are unfathomably deep in malignity against the Church of God ... . 11[[110]](#footnote-110)0

The unbelieving world is an abyss because it defines itself by falsehood. How many paths of falsehood are there? They are endless. It is akin to asking, “How many wrong answers to two plus two?” The number of wrong answers are endless. For this reason, Jesus says that the road to perdition is wide because there are an endless number of wrong ways to go:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in therefof.11[[111]](#footnote-111)1

Hence, the world is a bottomless, endless pit, because there are an unbounded number of wrong answers about the pathway to heaven.

**NB**: The narrow (strait) gate does not refer to the difficulty of getting to heaven, but rather that there is only one way to heaven (**St. John 14:6**11[[112]](#footnote-112)2). Elsewhere, the path to heaven is described as highway, referring to its ease of travel and safe transit provided by God’s Grace in Christ through the Gospel. The prophet Isaiah writes:

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err: *therein*. No lion shall be there, nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk *there* ... .11[[113]](#footnote-113)3

The Papacy arises from the world because its distinct teaching, namely, condemning the Gospel, is the desire and work of the world. In **Revelation** **13** one sees that the Papacy, at its heart underlying the veneer of Christianity, is of the world:

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.11[[114]](#footnote-114)4

The beast is the same beast the emerges from the bottomless pit, namely, the unbelieving world. The lamb-like appearance means this worldly beast is an antichrist, namely, a subtle opponent of Christ who inwardly is a ravening wolf but outward appears as a lamb, namely, comes in the name of Christ and claims to be a Christian but teaches the doctrines of men for the doctrine of God.11[[115]](#footnote-115)5 Jesus says in St. Matthew’s Gospel:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.11[[116]](#footnote-116)6

A crass opponent of Christ denies Him or the Holy Trinity or the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith openly. A subtle opponent comes in the name of Christ but substitutes his doctrine for Christ’s doctrine. AntiChrist means “in place of Christ”. In Greek “anti” can mean “against” or “in place of”. The latter expression is how it is usually used in the New Testament. An antiChrist, therefore, puts himself in the place of Christ or substitutes himself for Christ as the teacher of the Church -- obviously, therefore, in such substitution is also in *opposition to* Christ.

**2(c)**. **the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them**.

Overcoming the witnesses means personal suffering not extinguishing of the Office of the Preaching of the Gospel. This passage is reminiscent of **Daniel 7:21**: “ I beheld, and the same horn [the Papacy] made war with the saints, and prevailed against them ... .” The Papacy prevailed against the saints *not* in the spiritual sense because the saints had the Saving Gospel against which the gates of hell could not prevail.11[[117]](#footnote-117)7 Rather the Papacy prevailed against the saints because the Papacy is also a civil power11[[118]](#footnote-118)8, however, illegitimately according to Scripture, and plied great suffering against the saints through the civil power in order to persecute Christians because of their preaching of the Gospel.

*8. And their dead bodies* shalllie *in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also the Lord was crucified.*

**A. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street**: Just as our Lord suffered cruelly at the hands of the world because of the Gospel, so the Church suffers the indignities of the world because of the Gospel, bodies left in the streets and not afforded a proper burial being a vivid image of such abuse. Jesus says:

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours.11[[119]](#footnote-119)9

Christ Himself was not afforded the mercies normally afforded the condemned when He was led to crucifixion because of the Gospel. Luther writes:

As Christ is hanging on the cross, He calls out and says, “I thirst” (John 19:28). Then His crucifers do not give Him a drink of water. In their great envy and hate, vexation, and vengeance they give Him gall and vinegar, Psalm 69:21, or as St. Mark writes (15:23), “wine mingled with myrrh” to drink in His great thirst. They do not do this to the other criminals who were crucified on either side of Him. It is the custom through the world to sympathize with criminals when they are being led out and executed; when their soul is troubled and their tongue becomes dry, they are given the best and most refreshing drink, as the wise man commands in Proverbs 31:6. In short, it is unheard of in the world that men should lose all compassion for any robber, murderer, or scoundrel, however evil he might have been. But they lost all compassion for Christ on the cross. This is the devil, who so embitters, incites, and impels the world against Christ.12[[120]](#footnote-120)0

So many of the saints have suffered horrific indignities. Sts. Peter and Paul were wrongly executed. Other Christians were brutally murdered when they were tossed to the lions. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.12[[121]](#footnote-121)1

**B. in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt,**

**where also the Lord was crucified**12[[122]](#footnote-122)2: The great city is the city of the Anticrhrist, the Papacy, because of his virulent opposition to the Gospel wherever it may rule. The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard writes:

The great city is Rome and wherever the power of the Church of Rome extends, since the head of the Roman Church resides in Rome. It is called: (1) Sodom, because of the physical and spiritual fornication, that is, idolatry, because of Sodom-like sins; (2) Egypt, because of the tyranny that it exercises against the godly. (3) Jerusalem, because it still to this day crucifies Christ in His members (Zech. 2:8, Acts 9:5). It follows the ungodliness of Jerusalem, which is manifested in crucifying Christ.12[[123]](#footnote-123)3

*9. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves*.

**A. The New Testament era**: The 3 and 1/2 days is he NT era12[[124]](#footnote-124)4 and indicates the Gospel Ministry will suffer persecution from the world through the entire New Testament era. 3 and 1/2 is one half of 7, the number of perfection. There are two halves in human history: The Old Testament and the New Testament. The two combine to form the totality of human history. 3 and 1/2 is used to indicate one of the halves, in this case, the New Testament era.

**B. The world does not mourn the suffering Church because the world hates and persecutes the Church because of the Gospel**. The world does not mourn the suffering and death of Christians but rather celebrates it just as the world celebrated our Lord and Savior’s death. The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes:

“The world hath not the grace,” says Luther, to appreciate and reward the good works of Christians, e.g., their preaching of the Gospel in the world, their prayers, their intercessions. ... The world hates and persecutes Christians just because of their very best works. ... [For the preaching of the Gospel the Apostles were beaten, Acts 5:40; Rom. 8:36; I Cor. 4:13] But our gracious God makes up for that. He is so pleased with our good works that He rewards us richly for doing them.12[[125]](#footnote-125)5

*10. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.*

The world not only does not mourn the suffering of Christians, but rejoices over their suffering. The Rev. Daniel Poellet writes:

In their personal view “they that dwell upon the earth,” ... the enemies of God’s witnesses, feel that the occasion calls for special celebration. Their rejoicing and merry making (Luke 15:23) includes the traditional exchange of gifts (Esther 9:22), to mark what they regard as an especially happy and auspicious occasion.12[[126]](#footnote-126)6

*11. And after three score and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.*

**A. And after three score and an half**: A limited period of time determined by God -- because the Spirit of God revived them -- not by the enemies of God’s Church.12[[127]](#footnote-127)7

**B. the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them:** “It is easy to see what is meant by what is reported here, that the Spirit of Life from God entered into these slain witnesses after three days and a half. The Antichrist may kill faithful witnesses, but God will soon again raise up others who will proclaim the truth. And so it appears as if the original witnesses had risen from the dead.”12[[128]](#footnote-128)8 Compare for example Herod and St. John the Baptist: “Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead ... .”12[[129]](#footnote-129)9 John Gerhard writes: “*The Spirit of life came upon them*, that is, God would continually raise them up, for He would stir up other faithful and genuine teacher sin their place. The joy and exultation of the Antichristian persecutors did not last long, for in the place of the witnesses who were executed, God substituted and stirred up others who, by preaching the Word, will attack the Antichrist and his kingdom and errors by the same strength of spirit and with the same boldness. Therefore these two witnessers will be raised up in their successors, whom God will clothe with power from on high’ (Luke 24:49), so that they may continue the battle against the Antichrist. This is what Herod said about Christ: ‘He is John the Baptist who has risen from the dead’ (Mat. 14:2, Mark 6:14).”13[[130]](#footnote-130)0

*12. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.*

**A. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither**.

While in the enemies of the Church did their worst, in the last analysis they can never really harm the Church. “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. IN the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” **St. John 16:33**.

**B. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them**.

The enemies of the Church are, in the last analysis, powerless to deprive Christians of heavenly glory and everlasting happiness. Just as the Cloud, the Presence of the Angel of the Lord, led Israel out of the tyrannical clutches of Egypt, so the Church escapes the clutches of the world, the flesh, and the devil, through Christ’s Gospel, the Power of God unto salvation (**Romans 1:16**). The world, the flesh, and the devil, can only standby powerless while slip their cruel grips into heavenly bliss and glory.

*13. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

**A. And the same hour was there a great earthquake**.

The earthquake indicates a Divine blow to the foundation of the city of the beast, namely, Rome, the home of the Antichrist, the Pope. The Divine blow is the Gospel, culminating in the Reformation’s severe blow the Kingdom of the Papacy by the restoration of the pure teaching of the Gospel. While the Papacy remained, it suffered diminution, evinced in the loss of a tenth part of the city and seven thousand slain. The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt writes:

The Papacy did receive a mortal blow from the Reformation. “But from this wound it did recover, insomuch that its antirchristian rule goes on, and the greater part of the world runs after the beast in wonder and amazement. 13[[131]](#footnote-131)1

**B. and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.**

The Papacy suffers a blow. Part of the city fell and many perished. But the Papacy continues. This passage is similar to that passage in **Revelation 13**:**3**. “And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.” The beast, i.e., the Papacy, suffered a severe wound by the Reformation and its restoration of the clear teaching of the Gospel, but it was not the end of it. The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt writes:

The Seer beholds that one of the beast’s heads is wounded unto death, but then presently the wound is healed, so that the beast does not die. However, it is said here that one head was wounded. The Papacy did receive a mortal blow13[[132]](#footnote-132)2 from the Reformation. But from this wound it did recover, insomuch that its antichristian rule goes on, and the greater part of the world runs after the beast in wonder and amazement. And the dwellers on earth worship the beast. They say, “Who is like unto the beast?” We see to this day that the greater part of the world pays homage to the Pope. The membership of the Church of Rome worships the Pope, calls him God and treats him as God. Obedience to the Pope is regarded as the First Commandment.13[[133]](#footnote-133)3

**C. The terrible blow to the Papacy was the restoration of the clear teaching the Gospel, namely, Absolution.**

The terrible blow the Reformation dealt the Papacy was the restoration of the clear teaching of the Gospel, namely, Absolution. The prophet Isaiah writes that the Breath of the Mouth of Lord slew the Papacy:

But with righteousness shall he [the Rod of Jesse, Christ] shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and eh shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.13[[134]](#footnote-134)4

The Apostle St. John writes that the Breath of the Lord’s Mouth is Absolution:

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.13[[135]](#footnote-135)5

To this day the Papacy teaches that Absolution is penalty:

**Absolution, see Penance** [penalty] ... Beneath changes in discipline and celebration this sacrament [of Penance] the same *fundamental structure* is to be discerned. It comprises two equally essential elements: on the one hand, the ats of the man who undergoes conversion through the action of the Holy Spirit; namely, contrition, confession, and satisfaction [penalty]; on the other, God’s action through the Church, who through the bishop and his priests forgives sins in the name of Jesus Christ and determines the manner of satisfaction [penalty], also prays for the sinner does penance with him. Thus the sinner is healed and re-established in ecclesial communion.13[[136]](#footnote-136)6

Before the Absolution comes not contrition, sorrow for sin and the desire for pardon, but “satisfaction”, namely, a work to be done before the Absolution. With this insertion the Papacy wipes out the pure teaching of Absolution.

The Lutheran Church confesses that Absolution contains no satisfaction or penalty but is full and free pardon for Christ’s Sake:

Moreover, the power of the keys administers and presents the Gospel through absolution, which [proclaims peace to me and] is the true voice of the Gospel. {German text: The word of absolution speaks peace to me and is the Gospel itself.} Thus we also comprise absolution when we speak of faith, because *faith cometh by hearing*, as Paul says Rom. 10, 17. For when the Gospel is heard, and the absolution [*i.e.*, the promise of divine grace] is heard, the conscience is encouraged and receives consolation. (40) And because God truly quickens through the Word, the keys truly remit sins before God [here on earth sins are truly canceled also before God in heaven] according to Luke 10, 16: *He that heareth you heareth Me*. Wherefore the voice of one absolving must be believed not otherwise than we would believe a voice from heaven.13[[137]](#footnote-137)7

This teaching follows Scripture’s teaching on Absolution. St. John the Baptist, for example, imposed no satisfaction or penalty on people after he Absolved them. The Evangelist St. Luke writes:

And the people asked him saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith, unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, and what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be content with your wages.13[[138]](#footnote-138)8

In other words live your lives by faith (“Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance .... [**St. Luke 3:8**]). As you’ve experienced God’s Mercy in the Gospel likewise show Mercy towards others. Because faith fulfills God’s commandments simply did your duty and defraud or shakedown no one but live by the Righteousness of the Gospel.

*14. The second woe is past;* and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly*.

The Last Three Plagues are Identified as Woes because of their Close Connection to the Gospel. The plagues began in **Chapter 8**. For review of the plagues and woes here they are listed again:

**A. Plagues against opponents of the Gospel and the Church**: These plagues are God curbing those who are inveterate foes of the Gospel of the Church. All these plagues are the answer of the prayers of the saints that God curb by force those who will not relent in trying to destroy the Church.

**B. The list of plagues**:

The seven plagues are:

1. Hail and fire destroys crops and men. Hail and fire mingled constituted one of the plagues Moses sent upon Egypt because Egypt was interfering with and threatening the Gospel.

2. Burning mountain (reminiscent of Mt. Sinai wherein the law was given): The Ten Commandments restrain the consciences and bodies of the men of the nations.

3. Wormwood: The fountain of false doctrine sows discord amongst Satan’s ranks and manifests those approved of God.13[[139]](#footnote-139)9

4. Falling celestial bodies: Governments are weakened and restrained to they cannot vent their full fury and force against the Gospel and the Church.

**The Last Three Plagues are Identified as Woes because of their Close Connection to the Gospel**.

5. Jerusalem destroyed because of its persecution of the Gospel: The Destroyer (the devil): Jesus, as God and Risen and Ruling Lord, uses the dark forces of the abyss of the world to coral and restrain evil men (unbelievers, no seal on the forehead, namely, no Gospel because of their unbelief), in this case the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem – the Lord punishes evil with evil and, thereby, restrains it.14[[140]](#footnote-140)0 The destroyer here is the devil who leads Judah and Jerusalem to destruction through the false doctrine of continuing to hew to Moses even though Moses directed the people to follow Jesus when He came. Jesus gives him the name “destroyer”14[[141]](#footnote-141)1 because the devil is a murderer through his false doctrine. “Jesus said unto them, ... Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do. He was murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is not truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own14[[142]](#footnote-142)2: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” **St. John 8:42**, **44**.

6. The Papacy is destroyed because of its persecution of the Gospel. The Papacy is connected to the Gospel and is also an illegitimate civil power because of its usurpation of the sword in the name of the Gospel. Consequently, the Lord afflicts it through civil conflicts, e.g., the Turks, in order to restrain the Papacy and its persecution of the Gospel and the church. Ultimately the Papacy is consumed by the brightness of His coming (**II Thessalonians 2:8**). The Papacy’s torments are similar to Jerusalem’s because it is a civil power that persecutes the Gospel.14[[143]](#footnote-143)3 All, however, are not destroyed because believers also reside in the Papacy.

7. The Final Judgement: The Final Judgment puts a curb on the wicked because of its coming weighs on the minds of men and also the Final Judgment brings an end to any all evil unbelievers can inflict upon the Church. The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt writes, “Death is the final judgment of God, and temporal death is for all impenitent sinners the entrance into eternal death. God finally delivers those who have despised the earnestness and goodness of God into death and destruction.”14[[144]](#footnote-144)4

*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 he shall reign for ever and ever*.

The final woe is the end of the end when all men, whether believer or not, submit to the Lord. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.14[[145]](#footnote-145)5

Believers gladly kneel before the Lord. For unbelievers, it is the final woe because they are forced, because of their unbelief, to kneel forever to the Lord, much to their everlasting woe and torment, as shall be see in verse 18.

The Rev. Dr. Luther Poellet writes:

John says that when teh seventh angel sounded, “there were great voices in heaven” (Rev. 11:15). Because these voices poke of “our Lord” (11:15), we may take them to be the voices of all the inhabitants of heaven, both saints and angels. They are great voices because they join to form a great chorus, including the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matt. 24:31; also see Rev. 7:9, 19:1). This verse, with Rev. 19:6, ... was such an inspiration to the composer Handel that it moved him to write the immortal Hallelujah Chorus in his oratorio *Messiah*. After he had composed this chorus, his servant is said to have seen tears streaming from his eyes. “I did think I did see all heaven before me,” Handel later confessed, “and the great God Himself!”14[[146]](#footnote-146)6

*16. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God.*

The elders represent the Public Office of the Gospel and the public representatives of the Church, all the saints. Whether on earth in the Kingdom of Grace or in the Kingdom of Glory, the Church is always before the Throne of God. The Rev. Dr. J. T. Mueller writes:

All true believers, who in this life were subject to Christ in His Kingdom of Grace, will forever be His subjects in the Kingdom of Glory (*regnum gloriae*), which is the continuation of the Kingdom Grace in perfection, Acts 7, 55. 56; 1 Pet. 5, 4; 1 John 3, 2. Then the adherents of the Church Militant (*membra ecclesiae militantis*), Rom. 8, 17, will be members of the Church Triumphant (*membra ecclesiae triumphantis*), Rom. 5, 2; John 17, 24. To point out the inestimable blessings of Christ’s Kingdom of Grace and the ineffable bliss of His Kingdom of Glory is the real burden of Christian preaching, the purpose of which is not only to make sinners partakers of eternal life, but also to fill them with an ardent longing for heaven, 1 Cor. 1, 7; Rom. 8, 23; Titus 2, 13; 2 Pet. 3, 13; Phil. 3, 20.14[[147]](#footnote-147)7

*17. Saying, We Give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned*.

**A. Saying, We Give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken they great power.** The Church thanks God for using His Great Power for their Salvation through the Gospel. Through the Gospel men are saved and gain life everlasting because God their Savior goes on forever, “which art, and wast, and art to come”. Because of the Salvation of the Gospel Fashioned by Christ’s Passion, He is called in **Isaiah 9:6** the “Everlasting Father” because by His Passion He Fathers men unto life everlasting.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the governmetn shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.14[[148]](#footnote-148)8

**B. and has reigned**. God reigns in glory and on earth. Through the Gospel God’s Reign on earth is Gracious, forgiving men’s sins and saving forever. In Glory God continues to reign by blessing men with inestimable and everlasting blessings.

*18. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.*

**A. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged.** The nations are angry and suffer woe because God’s judges their evil works. The self-righteous, which constitutes all unbelievers, do not like their righteousness condemned but praised. This final judgment is the second death. The Apostle St. John writes:

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.14[[149]](#footnote-149)9

St. Augustine writes:

As, then, there are two regenerations, of which I have already made mention, – the one according to faith, and which takes place in the present life by means of baptism; the other according to the flesh, and which shall be accomplished in its incorruption and immortality by means of the great and final judgment, – so are there also two resurrections, – the one the first and spiritual resurrection, which has place in this life, and preserves us from coming into the second death; the other the second, which does not occur now, but in the end of the world, and which is of the body, not of the soul, and which by the last judgment shall dismiss some into the second death, others into that life which has no death.15[[150]](#footnote-150)0

John Gerhard writes:

The second death is eternal death15[[151]](#footnote-151)1, where the godless in particular are separated and remain separated in eternity. This, then, is the horrible death about which Scripture testifies that we should protect ourselves from it.

And this is what is really odd about death: it exists side by side with life. For, the godless will live in eternity in as much as they have to suffer eternal suffering and yet they will still be dead in eternity, for they will be separated from the true life which is in God. They live forever. Why? Because it is written: **Their worm will not die, Isa. 66:24**. They die forever. Why? Because it is written that this is the **second death**, Rev. 20:14. There will be a ‘dead’ life and also a ‘living’ death. After the passage of many hundred thousands of years they will remember that this is first the beginning of their torture.

The third is a spiritual death in sins, which is the path to eternal death. Here, in particular, the godless who confidently and sacrilegiously plow ahead in their sins are dead before the eyes of God, Eph. 2:1, 2 – You formerly were **dead in sins**. That’s why when at one time a person called by the Lord, said: **Lord, allow me that I may first go out and bury my father**. Jesus answered him: **Let the dead bury their dead**. Notice that He is referring to this spiritual death in sins.

And St. Paul says in 1 Tim. 5:6 about a widow **who was living in willful lust:** she **was dead while living**.

That this, then, is a death you may conclude from the fact that just as the life of the body is embodied in the soul, the life of the soul is thus embodied in God. If, then, on this account, God the Lord does not rest in a soul with His grace and Spirit, how is that soul able to live? Now, however, God does not rest in the soul of the godless with His grace and Spirit.”15[[152]](#footnote-152)2

**B. and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.** Another component of the woe is that they see those justified by faith through grace praised for the reward of their good works that proceed from saving faith.

*19. And the temple of God was opened in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

**A. And the temple of God was opened in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.** The Temple of God and the Ark of the Covenant was where God located Himself in His Mercy in Christ for the people of Israel and, indeed, for all men because the people of Israel were the stewards of the Mysteries (the Gospel) for the sake of Israel and the Gentiles. “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” **Romans 3:1-2**.

**B. and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.** There, however, is no comfort for the unbelievers because they rejected God’s Merciful Presence in the Gospel. Now all they enjoy are “lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail,” namely, the everlasting wrath of God because they rejected the Gospel. That presence, namely God’s wrathful presence, is the presence of God they now enjoy forever because of their unbelief. This disastrous outcome is the last and final woe that goes on forever.The Evangelist St. Luke writes:

Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all *ye* workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.15[[153]](#footnote-153)3

1. 1Beast refers to man bereft of the Image of God. In this case, the beast, namely, the Papacy, is bereft of the Image of God because he rejects and persecutes the Gospel, which Gospel restores in fallen men (beasts) the Image of God.

   **Beast**: The Greek word used for beast is therion. Therion means a “*(wild) animal, beast* ... fig., persons w. a ‘bestial nature’ ... .” This expressions is used to described man according to the fallen human nature. Man according to the fallen human nature is indeed unruly and rebellious against God’s Word. St. Peter writes: “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.” (II Peter 2:12) Jude writes: “But these speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.” (Jude 10) The Greek words Sts. Peter and Jude are “alogia zoa”. Alogia means without the word. And zoa means living creature. So man without the Word of God and thereby lacking the image of God is called a wild beast by Scripture. St. Augustine writes: “... the slippery motion of falling away [from what is good] takes possession of the negligent only gradually, and beginning from perverse desire for the likeness of God, arrives in the end at the likeness of beasts. ... The true honor of man is the image and likeness of God, which is not preserved except it be in relation to Him by whom it is impressed. Th less therefore that one loves what is one’s own, the more one cleaves to God. But through the desire of making trial of his own power, man by his own bidding falls down to himself as to a sort of intermediate grade. And so, while he wishes to be as God is, that is, under no one, he is thrust on, even from his own middle grade, by way of punishment, to that which is lowest, that is, to those things in which beasts delight: and thus, while his honor is the likeness of God, but his dishonor is the likeness of the beast ... .” The Lord says in the prophet Jeremiah: “Yea, the stork in heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.” Jeremiah 8:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2“J. T. Mueller says: ‘Luther called the Diet of Augsburg “the last trumpet before Judgment Day”; hence we may well call the confession there made the *blast* of the trumpet, which, indeed, has gone forth into all lands, even as the Gospel of God, which it proclaims in is purity.’” The Rev. Dr. Friedrich Bente, Historical Introductions tot he Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, *Concordia Triglotta*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921, p.23. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3“The last part is a prophetical description of the future glory of God’s kingdom under the picture of the division of Canaan and of the New Jerusalem, chaps. 40-48. ... The vast extent of the area of this singular Temple is a feature which, clearly marks its ideal character. ‘It symbolizes the great enlargement of the kingdom of God, when Jehovah-Messiah shall reign to the ends of the earth.” The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible, The Old Testament*, Vol. II, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924, pp. 511, 591 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 4“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chier corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” **Ephesians 2:19-22**.

   The Church is fitly frame, namely, righteous in every respect, because it possess the Righteousness of Christ by faith through the Gospel (**Galatians 3:26-27**). This precise and exacting righteousness of the Gospel the prophet Ezekiel bears out in **Ezekiel Chapters 40-42** where in he records Jesus (the man in linen) measuring the Temple and its precise dimensions. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 5“And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, *to* Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, *to* Tubal and Javan, *to* the isles afar off, that have no heard of my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.” **Isaiah 66:19**. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 6“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you *from their company*, and shall reproach your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.” **St. Luke 6:22-23**. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 7“*Reed* (measuring reed, *calaumus*) **6** cubits (c. **9** ft.).” *Concordia Bible Dictionary*, ed. Erwin L. Lueker, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 93, s. v. “**measures**”. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 8The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular. Commentary of the Bible, The Old Testament*, Vol. II, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924, p. 585. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 9Compare Daniel: “Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins *were* girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also *was* like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.” **Daniel 10:5-6**.

   “It is evident from the entire description that Daniel here had a vision of the Angel of the Presence, the Angel of the Countenance, the Messiah Himself, as He revealed Himself to the believers of the Old Testament. Cp. **Rev. 1, 13-15**.” The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular. Commentary of the Bible, The Old Testament*, Vol. II, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924, p. 627. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 10“And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.”  **Revelation 1:15**. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 11The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible, The Old Testament*, Vol. II, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924, pp. 586. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 12“The woman came with the opinion concerning Christ that with Him the remission of sins should be sought. This worship is the highest worship of Christ. Nothing great could she ascribe to Christ. To seek from Him the remission of sins was truly to acknowledge the Messiah. Now, thus to think of Christ, thus to worship Him, thus to embrace Him, is truly to believe.” The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, **Article III. Of Love and the Keeping of the Law**.33, *Triglotta*, p. 163, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 13“Von Christo, dem Konige der Ehren [Concerning Christ, the King of Glory]”, *Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift Alten and Neuen Testaments, nach der deutschen Uebersetzung Dr. Martin Luthers*, [The Bible or the Entire Holy Scripture, Old and New Testaments, according to the German Translation of Dr. Martin Luther], St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1905, p. 566. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 14**Psalm 24:3-6**. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 15**Malachi 3:1-4**. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 16**Hebrews 9:23-26**. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 17“Moreover, the power of the keys administers and presents the Gospel through absolution, which [proclaims peace to me and] is the true voice of the Gospel. {German text: The word of absolution speaks peace to me and is the Gospel itself.} Thus we also comprise absolution when we speak of faith, because *faith cometh by hearing*, as Paul says Rom. 10, 17. For when the Gospel is heard, and the absolution [*i.e.*, the promise of divine grace] is heard, the conscience is encouraged and receives consolation. (40) And because God truly quickens through the Word, the keys truly remit sins before God [here on earth sins are truly canceled also before God in heaven] according to Luke 10, 16: *He that heareth you heareth Me*. Wherefore the voice of one absolving must be believed not otherwise than we would believe a voice from heaven. (41) And absolution [that blessed word of comfort] properly can be called a sacrament of repentance, as also the more learned scholastic theologians speak. (42) Meanwhile this faith is nourished in a manifold way in temptations, through the declarations of the Gospel [the hearing of sermons, reading] and the use of the Sacraments. For these are [seals and] signs of [the covenant and grace in] the New Testament, *i.e.*, signs [of propitiation and] the remission of sins. They offer, therefore, the remission of sins, as the words of the [p. 263] Lord’s Supper clearly testify, Matt. 26, 26. 28: *This is My body, which is given for you. This is the cup of the New Testament*, etc. Thus faith is conceived and strengthened through absolution, through the hearing of the Gospel, through the use of the Sacraments, so that it may not succumb while it struggles with the terrors of sin and death. (43) This method of repentance is plain and clear, and increases the worth of the power of the keys and of the Sacraments, and illumines the benefit of Christ, and teaches us to avail ourselves of Christ as Mediator and Propitiator.” *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, **Article XII. (V.)**.39-43, *Triglotta*, pp. 261, 263, translation from the German in braces is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 18**Ephesians 5:25**, **26-27**. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. 19A cubit is 18 inches. “*Cubit* ... 18 in ... . *Reed* (measuring reed, *calamus*), 6 cubits*.*” Erwin L. Lueker, *The Concordia Bible Dictionary*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 93. s. v. “**measures**”. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. 20“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” **Hebrews 13:8**. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. 21The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible, The Old Testament*, Vol. II, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924, pp. 591. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. 22“And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” **I Corinthians 15:28**. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. 23*Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 392, footnote 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. 24*The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, **Article XXIV. (XII.)**.32, *Triglotta*, p. 395. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. 25“Also circumcision and the Passover were, ever since their institution, means of grace for the period of the Old Testament. ... On this account Luther says: ‘It is not true that the Sacraments of the New Testament differ from the Sacraments of the Old Testament as to their signification’ [namely, as God-appointed signs of the *grace* of God] .... ‘Both our and the fathers’ signs or Sacraments have a word of promise attached which calls for faith and can be fulfilled by no other work. therefore they are signs or Sacraments of justification.’ ... Both through the Word about the coming Messiah and through circumcision and the Passover, the Sacraments of the Old Testament, the remission of sins was given and, by the believers, appropriated.” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I, pp. 214, 215.

    “The sacrifices of the Old Testament could, in themselves, not atone for sin, but being shadows of Christ’s sacrifice, they offered in advance, as it wee, to the people that forgiveness of sins which Christ would procure on the cross. Like a check, properly signed and secured by sufficient funds in the bank, is worth all it says, so the Old Testament sacrifices were checks which God himself issued to the people, and which were secured by the treasure Christ earned by His life and death. In appearance they were sacrifices, but in reality they were Sacraments, through which grace and forgiveness was offered to the people.” The Rev. Edward W. A. Koehler, *A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther’s Small Catechism, Edited by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States, with Additional Notes for Students, Teachers, and Pastors* *by Edward W. A. Koehler*, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1981, p. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. 26**Ephesians 2:19-22**. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. 27“So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” **Romans 10:17**. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. 28*The Augsburg Confession*, **Article V: Of the Ministry**.1-3, *Triglotta*, p. 45, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. 29Church fellowship and its basis, namely, profession of the same doctrine by men, is expressed here. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. 30*The Augsburg Confession*, **Article XIII: Of the Use of the Sacraments**.1, 2, *Triglotta*, p. 49, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. 31*The Augsburg Confession*, **Article VIII: What the Church Is**.1-2, *Triglotta*, p. 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. 32The Rev. Dr. C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, tr. J. T. Mueller, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 8. The Rev. Dr. C. F. W. *Church and Ministry* is the official position of the Missouri Synod on the questions of Church and Ministry. “... it was resolved to publish the manuscript ‘in our name and as our unanimous confession’ [that of the Missouri Synod].” The Rev. Dr. C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, tr. J. T. Mueller, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. 33**Ephesians 4:4-5**. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. 34**Ephesians 2:11-22**. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. 35**Galatians 3:28-29**. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. 36**St. Luke 21:20-24**. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. 37**St. Matthew 3:7-10**. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. 38Chaim Potok, *Wanderings: Chaim Potok’s History of the Jews*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978, p. 224. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. 39“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.’ **Deuteronomy 4:1**. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. 40**Acts 1:7, 8**, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. 41**Romans 1:16-17**. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. 42**St. Luke 24:46-49**, amplification in brackets and underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. 43**Psalm 109:8**: “Let his days be few; *and* let another take his office.” [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. 44**Acts 1:20-22**, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. 45e.g., “This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop [Greek: *episkopee*], he desireth a good work.” **I Timothy 3:1**, amplification in brackets added. The Episcopal Church gets it’s name from the Greek word *episkopos*, namely bishop. It is the Church of Bishops (*Episkopoi*).

    Luther translates *episkopee* “Bischofamt”, namely, “Office of Oversight”. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. 46“**Chemnitz**, **Martin**, Lutheran theologian. B. 1522 ... He took the leading part in getting out the Formula of Concord, and the Catalog of Testimonies, which is appended to the Symbolical Books, is essentially his work.... Together with Selnecker and Kirchner, Chemnitz, in 1582, published an Apology of the Book of Concord. ... The most learned theologian of his time was mourned by the whole Lutheran Church; his importance is seen in the Catholic saying that if Chemnitz had not come, Luther had not stood.” *Concordia Cyclopedia*, pp. 127, 128, **s.v. Chemnitz, Martin**. “‘If the Second Martin had not come, the first would not have prevailed. – 17th Century Adage.’” *The Second Martin: The Life and Theology of Martin Chemnitz*, The Rev. Dr. J. A. O. Preus, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, back cover. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. 47*The Septuagint*. “The earliest attempt to translate the Scriptures is represented by the Greek version of the Old Testament, commonly known as the Septuagint(LXX [70]). It owes its name to the story (now discredited) that it is the work of seventy-two translators, who at the instance of King Ptolemy II (287 to 245 B. C.) were deputed to Egypt by the high priest Eleazar to prepare a version of the Jewish Law for the royal library at Alexandria. While there is doubtless a kernel of truth in this story and the bare fact of a translation of the Law in the days of Ptolemy need not be questioned, the Septuagint as a whole exhibits such varying degrees of skill and accuracy in the art of translation that it can neither be the product of a single body of translators acting in unison nor of a single age. The Pentateuch, for example, is pretty well done, Daniel exceedingly poor, Ecclesiastes so slavishly literal that it is little more than Grecized Hebrew. The most that can be said as to the origin of the Septuagint is that it was begun ca. 285 B. C. and completed before 130 B. C. (cf. Prolog of Ecclesiasticus). The Septuagint, especially in the arrangement of chapters and verses, frequently deviates from the Hebrew and presents also in its renderings innumerable divergences from our present Massoretic text. This is due in part, no doubt, to the arbitrary procedure of the translators, but also in some eases to a Hebrew original differing from the text we possess to-day. In more than one instance this is tacitly assumed in Luther's version. Indeed, the Septuagint, though it must be used with caution, is an invaluable aid in all text-critical work on the field of the Old Testament. This translation was adopted by the Greek-speaking Jews, was used by Paul and the apostles, and regarded as authoritative, even inspired, by the early Christian fathers. The constant appeal to it on the part of the leaders of the Church to prove the Messiahship of Jesus aroused the antagonism of the Jews and gave rise to three rival translations known under the names of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus.” *Concordia Cyclopedia*, pp. 78, 79, s. v. “**Bible Versions**”. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. 48“**Jerome**. One of the Fathers of the Church; b. 331 at Stridon, on the frontiers of Dacia; d. near Bethlehem, in 420 ; of Christian parentage, but was not baptized till 360, when he studied

    rhetoric and philosophy at Rome; lived in Gaul, then at Aquileia, on the Adriatic, till 373. ... To the last thirty-four years of his life belong the most important works of his career: his version of the Old Testament in Latin on the basis of the original text, the best of his Scriptural commentaries, his catalog of Christian authors, and the dialog against the Pelagians ... . To this period belong also his passionate polemical writings, which distinguished him among the early

    Fathers. Jerome was buried at Bethlehem, but his remains were later removed, the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome claiming the greater part of his relics. Among Jerome's works,

    besides the Bible translation noted above, now known as the Vulgate (‘the common,’

    since it was intended for the use of all men), are to be mentioned a book describing the chief places of interest in the Holy Land, several original commentaries on the Old Testament (chiefly

    Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel), and some New Testament commentaries. He also published some educational treatises. His theological position was not strong, since a clear exposition of doctrine

    caused him great difficulty, but his writings show much poetical skill. His great importance is due to the incalculable influence exerted through his Latin version of the Bible upon all subsequent theological development.” *Concordia Cyclopedia*, eds., Ludwig Fuerbring, Theodore Engelder, P. E. Kretzmann, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927, p. 387, s.v. “**Jerome**”. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. 49“**Ambrose**, Noted leader and teacher of the Western Church; b. Treves, 340; d. Milan, 397. Educated in Rome for a legal career; appointed consular prefect for Upper Italy; took up his residence in Milan about 370. After death of Bishop Auxentius a dispute between the orthodox and Arian parties caused a severe quarrel which threatened the peace of the city. Ambrose, as magistrate, was present to maintain order, when the people, suddenly, turning to him as a new

    candidate, transferred him from his official position to the episcopate. Since he was still a catechumen, his baptism took place at once, and eight days later, in 374, he was consecrated bishop. Ambrose was distinguished for his defense of the orthodox faith and for his firm stand in

    all matters revealed in Scripture, opposing both paganism and heresy with equal zeal. He did not hesitate to rebuke even the emperor when he permitted himself to become guilty of a massacre. As a teacher of the Church, Ambrose was concerned more with the practical and ethical side of Christianity than with the scientifically theological; among his works are De Officiis Ministrorum (Of the Offices of Christian Ministers), De Virginians (Of Virgins), and others. Toward the end of his life he exhibited a stronger tendency toward asceticism ..., for he emphasized the supposed value of celibacy, of voluntary poverty, and of the martyr's death. He did much for the reform and development of church music, not only in hymns, but also in the liturgy which is associated with his name. See Ambrosian Chant.” *Concordia Cyclopedia*, p. 16, s.v. **“Ambrose”**. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. 50*Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, tr. Fred Kramer, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 701, amplification and translation from the Greek in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. 51**St. Matthew 18:3**, **20**, amplification in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. 52The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard, *Annotations on the Revelation of St. John the Theologian*, 1643, tr. Paul A. Rydecki, Malone, TX: Repristination Press, 2016, p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. 53The prophet Daniel also brings out the nature of office and officer by using interchangeably in Daniel 7 *malcutha* (kingship, which would correlate to office) and *malcin* (kings, which would correlate with officer). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. 54“We believe that this is the message and meaning of this verse rather than that God will continue to raise new voices to take the place of those which have been silenced, as Luther, for example, succeeded Huss.” Poellet, *Revelation*, p. 149. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. 55That is following the lunar calendar. “Three and a half years of lunar months – 30 days per month – equals forty-two months and also equals 1,260 days.” The Rev. Dr. Louis A. Brighton, *Concordia Commentary ... Revelation*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 288. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. 56“According to Mark (13:1-26; cf. Mt. 24:1-31; Lk 21:5-28) this time period begins with Jesus’ own suffering, death, and resurrection and extends to his second coming. In other words, it is the entire church age, from Christ’s first advent to his second advent, when this world will end, the final judgment will take place, and then the new heaven and new earth will be the eternal home of God’s saints.” The Rev. Dr. Louis A. Brighton, *Concordia Commentary ... Revelation*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 289. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. 57The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, **The Christian World View**, *What is Christianity?*, Malone, TX: Repristination Press, reprinted 1997, Third Printing, August 1999 pp. 31, 32.

    “The world owes its continued existence to the unfinished task of the church in spreading that Word (Matt. 24:14).” The Rev. Dr. Eugene F. A. Klug, *Church and Ministry*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999, p. 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. 58“The entire church age is a time of tribulation ... .” The Rev. Dr. Louis A. Brighton, *Concordia Commentary ... Revelation*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 289. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. 59**St. John 15:18-20**. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. 60*Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III, p. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. 61Zechariah the prophet received his call in 520 BC. The Chronology of the Persian Period, 538-322 B.C., The Rev. Dr. Douglas Judisch, *Old Testament Chronology*, unpublished draft, 1989, see page covering period 522-465 B.C. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. 62“*Along with the seven eyes of the Lord*, for so I read and construe, that is, ‘with the Holy Spirit.’ The Gospel brings both Christ and, at the same time, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which traverse the whole world wherever the Gospel is preached. He calls the Holy Spirit an eye, because Christ’s kingdom is the kingdom of faith. It is situated only in knowledge, as Isaiah says (cf. Is. 53:11): ‘By His knowledge shall My servant make man righteous.’ That knowledge he calls an eye. In this way the prophet himself wanted to relate his allegory to a vision of physical things. That is the way he interprets the genuine temple and the real lampstand. This is the custom of the prophets. ... For the seven eyes who are to be with Zerubbabel, he says, are the eyes of the Lord; that is, His Spirit with His manifold gifts shall be present and with His favor shall strengthen and help the people of both the Jewish nation and the kingdom of Persia, that is, of all lands. Hence, as he said above, progress will come not through the sword or the might of armies but through the Spirit of God. And we also heard above ... that the seven eyes signify the Spirit of God with His gifts.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 51, 229. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. 63**Zechariah 4:1-14**. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. 64“The lampstand refers to the position or office of the preacher. The lampstand is single; that is, the preachers and teachers among the people of God are of one heart and of one mind and teach one and teh same thing, as Zechariah and Haggai and their companions do here. And it is of gold; that is, it is pure divine wisdom and not of clay or earth, which means that they do not have men’s words. The seven lamps on it means this: Though they teach one and the same thing, and though there is one Spirit in them, they still have varieties of gifts, as St. Paul testifies Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4; Eph. 4:7. The light is the Word that they preach physically, each one in accordance with the capacity of his lamps and his gifts. IN this way they let their light shine before men and are the light of the world, Matt. 5:14; 1 Thess. 5:5. The oil is the grace of the Holy Spirit, which preserves this light among the people of God and at all times is in and with the Word, so that this Word may always have power and success and may never stop or cease.” Martin Luther*, Luther’s Works*, Vol. 20, p. 225. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. 65Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 30, p. 286. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. 66The Spiritus septiformis, The Sevenfold Spirit: “To the Spirit, who rest on him [Christ], are given seven names that designate the Spirit’s various gifts and powers. On the basis of this passage the church speaks of a Spiritus septiformis. Accordingly, the prophecy of Zechariah, 4,6.110, and Rev. 1,4; 3,1; 4,5; 5,6 speak of the seven eyes or the seven spirit sof God, that is, of the Spirit of God in the diversity of his gifts, powers, and activities.” The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt, *Isaiah: The First Twelve Chapters*, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, p. 119. Dr. Stoeckhardt is commenting on Isaiah 11:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. 67“But we believe, teach, and confess that God the Father has so given His Spirit to Christ, His beloved Son, according to the assumed humanity (on account of which He is called also *Messias*, *i.e.*, the Anointed), that He has not received His gifts by measure as other saints. For *upon Christ* the Lord, according to His assumed human nature (because, according to His divinity, He is of one essence with the Holy Ghost), rests *The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge* [*and of the fear of the Lord*, Col. 2, 3; Is. 11, 2; 61, 1] ..., therefore (as the Fathers say) the entire fulness of the spirit has been communicated by the personal union to Christ according to the flesh, which is personally united with the Son of God.” *The Formula of Concord*, **Thorough Declaration, VIII. Of the Person of Christ**.72, 73, 74, *Triglotta*, p. 1041. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. 68“**Zerubbabel** ... born in Babylon ... . Son of Shealttiel (Ez. 3:2, 8; 5:2; Neh 12:1; Hg 1:1, 12, 14); led 1st colony of captives to Jerusalem (Ez 2; Neh 7:70; rebuilt temple despite Samaritan opposition (Ez. 3-6) with support of Haggai and Zechariah (Hg. 1:12, 15; 2:2-4; Zech. 4:6-10); restored courses of priests (Ez. 6:18). KJ: Zorobabel in Mt. 1:12, 13; Lk 3:27.” Erwin L. Lueker, *Concordia Bible Dictionary*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 145, s. v. **Zarubbabel**. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. 69“**Jeshua, Jeshuah** ... LORD is salvation. Late form of Joshua ... . 4. High priest returned with Zerubbabel (Ez. 3:2; 3:2-9; Neh. 7:7). Joshua in Zech. 3; 6:11-13; Hg. 1:1, 14. KJ, RV: Jesus in 1 Esd. 5:8, 48. 56.” Erwin L. Lueker, *Concordia Bible Dictionary*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 74. s. v. “**Jeshua, Jeshuah**”. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. 70“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” **Romans 3:1-2**. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. 71**Zechariah 4:11-14**. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. 72“That we may obtain this faith, *the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted*. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith, where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ’s sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ’s sake.” *The Augsburg Confession*, **Article V: Of the Ministry**.1-3, *Triglotta*, p. 45, underscore added.

    “*Of the Use of the Sacraments* they teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them.” *The Augsburg Confession*, **Article XIII: Of the Use of the Sacraments**.1, 2, *Triglotta*, p. 49, underscore added.

    “Although *the Church* properly is the congregation of saints and true believers, nevertheless, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled therewith, it is lawful to use Sacraments administered by evil men, according to the saying of Christ: *The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat*, etc. Matt. 23, 2. Both the Sacraments and Word are effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, notwithstanding they be administered by evil men.” *The Augsburg Confession*, **Article VIII: What the Church Is**.1-2, *Triglotta*, p. 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. 73As an aside, the olive tree also reminds of the Peace between God and sinful men effected by the Gospel. “And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.” **Genesis 8:11**. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. 74**St. John 20:21-23.** [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. 75**Romans 3:1-2**, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. 76“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken ... .” **Deuteronomy 18:15**. “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to teh Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.” **St. John 19:36**. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. 77**St. Matthew 18:3**, **20**. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. 78The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I, p. 67, translation of the Latin in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. 79“The term repentance is used in a narrow sense to signify the knowledge of sin and heartfelt sorrow and contrition. In Mark 1, 15 we read: ‘Repent ye and believe the Gospel.’ In this statement Jesus evidently did not include faith in repentance, otherwise his statement would be tautological. In Acts 20, 21 Paul relates that he had been ‘testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Since faith is named separately in this text, the term repentance cannot embrace knowledge of sin, contrition, and faith. Likewise, the Lord says concerning the Jews that despite the preaching of John the Baptist they ‘repented not afterward that they might believe him,’ Matt. 21, 32 (Luther translates: ‘tatet ihr dennoch nicht Buße, daß ihr ihm danach auch geglaubt hättet’). By repentance he refers to the effects of the Law and means to say that, since they had not become alarmed over their sins, it had not been possible for them to believe. For there will not be faith in a heart that has not first been terrified.

    “There is a similar usage as regards the term Gospel; sometimes it is used in a wide, then again in a narrow meaning. The narrow meaning is its proper sense; in its wide meaning it is used merely by way of synecdoche, signifying anything that Jesus preached, including even His very poignant preaching of the Law, as, for instance, the Sermon on the Mount and His reproving of wicked men. Besides the term Gospel is used in contradistinction to the Old Testament, which often signifies only the teaching of the Law.

    “Rom. 2, 16 we read: In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel. Here the apostle cannot refer to the Gospel in the narrow sense, for that has nothing to do with the Judgment, since Scripture declares: ‘He that believeth on Him is not condemned’ — ‘shall not come into condemnation.’ John 3, 18; 5, 24. By Gospel in this text, Paul understands the doctrine which he had proclaimed and which was composed of both Law and Gospel.

    “The term Gospel is unquestionably used in the narrow sense in Rom. 1, 16: I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It is called, first, a Gospel of Jesus Christ; next, a Gospel that saves all that believe it. No such demand is made upon us by the Law, which requires that we keep it. Accordingly, the apostle is here speaking of God’s gift to the world and of faith, hence of the Gospel in the narrow sense, to the exclusion of the Law.

    “Another pertinent text is Eph. 6, 15, which speaks of ‘the Gospel of peace.’ Since the Law does not bring peace, but only unrest, the apostle in this text is speaking of the Gospel in the narrow sense, that is, of the glad tidings that Jesus Christ is come into the world to save sinners.

    “Our Lutheran Confessions follow the Bible in using the term Gospel now in the wide, now in the narrow sense. That explains the statement which occurs in them, viz.: ‘The Gospel preaches repentance.’ You will have to note this fact in order to understand our thesis correctly: a commingling of Law and Gospel takes place when the Gospel of Christ, that is, the Gospel in the narrow sense, is turned into a preaching of repentance.

    “In the Apology, Art. XII, § 29 (Mueller, p. 171; Trigl. Conc., p. 258), we read: ‘For the sum of the Gospel is comprehended in these two parts: First, it tells us to amend our lives, thus denouncing every one as a sinner. In the second place, it offers forgiveness of sin, everlasting life, salvation, every blessing, and the Holy Spirit through Christ, by whom we are born again.’

    “It is quite evident that in this passage Melanchthon is using the term Gospel in the wide sense. Luther does the same in ever so many places throughout his writings, whenever he speaks of the Gospel’s reproving men. But when he teaches what the Gospel really is, he speaks of nothing but consolation, mercy, forgiveness of sins; in short, of what the Gospel in the narrow sense proclaims.

    “Lest you think that Melanchthon, who is not always absolutely to be trusted, used a faulty diction even in our Confessions, let me submit another citation from the Apology, Art. XII, §§ 53.54 (Mueller, p. 175; Trigl. Conc., p. 264): ‘Accordingly, the entire Scriptures urge these two doctrines. The one is the Law, which reveals our misery and reproves sin. The other doctrine is the Gospel; for the promise of God, when He offers grace through Christ, the promise of grace, is repeated again and again throughout the Scriptures ever since the days of Adam. For at first the promise of grace, or the first Gospel, was given to Adam in these words: ‘I will put emnity,’ etc. Afterwards promises concerning the same Christ were made to Abraham and the patriarchs; later it was preached by the prophets, and lastly the same promise was preached among the Jews by Christ Himself when He had come into the world, and finally it was spread among the Gentiles throughout the world by the apostles. For by faith in the Gospel all patriarchs and all the saints since the beginning of the world have been made righteous in the sight of God, not on account of their contrition or sorrow or any other work.’

    “From this statement you can see that when Melanchthon, a few pages previous, says: ‘First, the Gospel says: Amend your lives,’ he uses the term Gospel in the wider sense, referring to the tidings of grace together with the preaching of the Law, and vice versa. But in the last-quoted passage he speaks of ‘both parts’ as contrasted with one another, naming the two doctrines into which the entire Scripture is divided.” The Rev. Dr. C. F. W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*, tr. W. H. T. Dau, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929, pp. 278, 279, 280. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. 80“And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.” **Revelation 9:17**. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. 81“*19. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails; for their tails* were *like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them do they hurt*.” **Revelation 9:19**. **For their power is in their mouth**: Because Islam is a religion, its power comes through the preaching of its doctrine. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. 82“In all these passages Peter is the representative of the entire assembly of apostles [and does not speak for himself alone, but for all the apostles], as appears from the text itself. For Christ ask not Peter alone, but says: *Whom do ye say that I am?* And what is here said [to Peter alone] in the singular number: *I will give unto thee the keys; and whatsoever thou shalt bind*, etc., is elsewhere expressed [to their entire number], in the plural Matt. 18, 18: *Whatsoever ye shall bind* etc. And in John 20, 23: *Whosesoever sins ye remit*, etc. These words testify that the keys are given alike to all the apostles, and that all the apostles are alike sent forth [to preach]. ... Therefore it is necessary that in these passages Peter is the representative of the entire assembly of the apostles, and for this reason they do not accord to Peter any prerogative, aor superiority, or lordship [which he had, or was to have had, in preference to the other apostles]. ... However, as to the declaration: *Upon this rock I will build My Church*, certainly the Church has not been built upon the authority of man, but upon the ministry of the confession which Peter made, in which he proclaims that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He accordingly addresses him as a minister: *Upon this rock*, i.e. upon this ministry [Therefore he addresses him as a minister of this office in which this concession and doctrine is to be in operation, and says: *Upon this rock, i.e.,* this preaching ministry.]” *The Smalcald Articles:* **Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope**.23, 24, 25, *Triglotta*, p. 511. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. 83"The Public Ministry (De Ministerio Ecclesiastico): 5. The Call Into the Public Ministry", Christian Dogmatics, Vol. III, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953, Fourth Printing 1970, p. 453. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. 84“C. As my *King*, Christ with His almighty power *rules over all creatures*, *governs* *and protects His Church*, and finally *leads* *it to glory*. 331 *All power* is given unto Me *in heaven and earth*. *Matt.28:18*. (The Kingdom of Power. -- All creatures).” *The Small Catechism*, p. 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. 85The Greek word is τελέσωσιν (*telesosin*), which means completed, finished. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. 86The Apostle St. Paul uses the Greek word “*ge*”, which means, “earth”. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. 87The Apostle St. Paul uses the word “*oikoumene*”, which can mean in Greek, “the inhabited world”. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. 88*A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, **Saint Chrysostom: Homileis on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans**, ed. Philip Schaff, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted September 1980, p. 479.

    Likewise Luther: “18. But I say, because it says above ‘How are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard?’ Have they not heard? both Jews and Gentiles, as if to say, ‘They surely have,’ for the Scripture must be fulfilled, which says (and this is the proof), Ps. 19:4, Indeed they have, for Their voice has gone out to all the earth, a marvelous statement which points out that they themselves were not the authors of the Word but its instruments, and their words, have gone out, to the ends of the world, into the whole earth. Just as the sound of a pipe, or a trumpet, belongs to the pipe, but only in an instrumental way, but properly belongs to the art and the player.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 92, 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. 89“And ye are my witnesses of these things.” **St. Luke 24:48**. “Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.” **Acts 1:22**. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. 90*A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, **Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew**, ed. Philip Schaff, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted, May 1986, amplification in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. 91**St. Matthew 24:14**. “Holy Scripture is very explicit in teaching that the present world exists, by virtue of God’s express will and providence, for the sole purpose that the Gospel of Christ, the message of God’s gracious forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ’s vicarious satisfaction, may be proclaimed in it. In Matt. 24, 14 Christ tells us this very clearly and emphatically; He engraves it, as it were, upon brass and granite by declaring: ‘This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come,’ namely, the end of the world. God has indeed purchased mankind at a great cost. With the blood of Jesus Christ, His incarnate Son, He has paid the price for sinful man’s eternal salvation, and now He permits the world to stand in order that in it the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ may be proclaimed and that this Gospel-message may be accepted by men through faith.” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, **The Christian World View**, *What is Christianity?*, Malone, TX: Repristination Press, reprinted 1997, Third Printing, August 1999 pp. 31, 32.

    “The world owes its continued existence to the unfinished task of the church in spreading that Word (Matt. 24:14).” The Rev. Dr. Eugene F. A. Klug, *Church and Ministry*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999, p. 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. 92The son of perdition, the Antichrist, namely, the Papacy, was prophesied in **Isaiah 11:4**. “But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked [man].” Underscore and translation from the Hebrew in brackets added. The Breath of Christ’s Lip is Absolution (**St. John 20:21-23**, please see Lutheran Confessions below). The Papacy has corrupted Absolution by obscuring it through it’s false doctrine (please see the Lutheran Confessions and Luther below). The Reformation restored the teaching of Absolution, which is the Gospel, and, thereby, Christ slew the Papacy with the Gospel, i.e., the Breath of His Mouth.

    “Moreover, the power of the keys administers and presents the Gospel through absolution, which [proclaims peace to me and] is the true voice of the Gospel. {German text: The word of absolution speaks peace to me and is the Gospel itself.} Thus we also comprise absolution when we speak of faith, because *faith cometh by hearing*, as Paul says Rom. 10, 17. For when the Gospel is heard, and the absolution [*i.e.*, the promise of divine grace] is heard, the conscience is encouraged and receives consolation.” *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, **Article XII. (V.)**.39, *Triglotta*, pp. 261, translation from the German in braces is mine.

    “In addition to this, it is necessary to acknowledge that the keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the Church, as many most clear and firm arguments testify. ... Moreover, it is manifest, in the first place, that the Pope rules in the Church, and by the pretext of ecclesiastical authority and of the ministry has established for himself this kingdom. For he assigns as a pretext these words: *I will give unto thee the keys. ...* For they teach that sin are remitted because of the worth of our works. Then they bid us doubt whether the remission takes place. They nowhere teach that sins are remitted freely for Christ’s sake, and that by this faith we obtain remission of sins. ... Thus they obscure the glory of Christ, and deprive consciences of firm consolation, and abolish true divine services, namely, the exercises of faith struggling with [unbelief and] despair [concerning the promise of the Gospel]. ... What darkness the doctrine concerning vows has spread over the Gospel! There they feigned that vows are righteousness before God, and merit the remission of sins. Thus they have transferred the benefit of Christ to human traditions, and have altogether extinguished the doctrine concerning faith. ... Neither are these errors to be regarded as light; for they detract from the glory of Christ and bring destruction to souls, neither can they be passed by unnoticed.” *The Smalcald Articles****,* Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope**.24, 40, 44, 48, *Triglotta*, pp. 511, 515, 517, 519, underscore added.

    “But we were so blinded in the papacy that, even though St. Peter tells us that ‘we have the prophetic word made more sure’ and that we ‘do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place’ [II Pet. 1:19], we still cannot see what a bright light we have in the gospel. Therefore we must note here once again the description of the Christian church which Christ gives us, namely, that it is a group of people who not only have his Word but also love and keep it and forsake everything for the sake of love.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 51, p. 311.

    “God has already made a beginning with the Pope, striking the Antichrist with the lightning of the Gospel, striking the Antichrist with the lightning of the Gospel, which is the Spirit of his mouth, which is now opened and speaks, and is still striking among the wicked ... .” Martin Luther, *The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther Volume 2.2*, ed. John Nicholas Lenker, tr. John Nicholas Lenker and Others, Grand, Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000, p. 390. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. 93The Apostle St. Paul refers to the collapse of the Roman Empire and Caesar’s rule. After the demise of the Roman Empire, the Papacy publicly asserted its constant claim that it, too, held not only the spiritual sword of the Word but also the civil sword of the government. St. John Chrysostom says in sermon from around AD 400: “Some indeed say, the grace of the Spirit, but others the Roman empire, to whom I most of all accede. Wherefore? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would have not have spoken obscurely, but plainly, that even now the grace of the Spirit, that is the gifts, withhold him. And otherwise he ought not to have come, if he was about to come when the gifts ceased; for they have long since ceased.” *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series,* Volume XIII, pp. 388, 389**.** [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. 94The Spirit of Jesus’ Mouth is Absolution. “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me ,eve so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed in *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; Whose seover sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose seover *sins* ye retain, they are retained.” **St. John 20:21-23**. “Moreover, the power of the keys administers and presents the Gospel through absolution, which [proclaims peace to me and] is the true voice of the Gospel. {German text: The word of absolution speaks peace to me and is the Gospel itself.} Thus we also comprise absolution when we speak of faith, because *faith cometh by hearing*, as Paul says Rom. 10, 17. For when the Gospel is heard, and the absolution [*i.e.*, the promise of divine grace] is heard, the conscience is encouraged and receives consolation. (40) And because God truly quickens through the Word, the keys truly remit sins before God [here on earth sins are truly canceled also before God in heaven] according to Luke 10, 16: *He that heareth you heareth Me*. Wherefore the voice of one absolving must be believed not otherwise than we would believe a voice from heaven. (41) And absolution [that blessed word of comfort] properly can be called a sacrament of repentance, as also the more learned scholastic theologians speak. (42) Meanwhile this faith is nourished in a manifold way in temptations, through the declarations of the Gospel [the hearing of sermons, reading] and the use of the Sacraments. For these are [seals and] signs of [the covenant and grace in] the New Testament, *i.e.*, signs [of propitiation and] the remission of sins. They offer, therefore, the remission of sins, as the words of the [p. 263] Lord’s Supper clearly testify, Matt. 26, 26. 28: *This is My body, which is given for you. This is the cup of the New Testament*, etc. Thus faith is conceived and strengthened through absolution, through the hearing of the Gospel, through the use of the Sacraments, so that it may not succumb while it struggles with the terrors of sin and death. (43) This method of repentance is plain and clear, and increases the worth of the power of the keys and of the Sacraments, and illumines the benefit of Christ, and teaches us to avail ourselves of Christ as Mediator and Propitiator.” *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, **Article XII. (V.)**.39-43, *Triglotta*, pp. 261, 263, translation from the German in braces is mine.

    The Reformation restored the proper teaching of the Gospel that all believers received Absolution through the Gospel and not through the Papacy or any other man. “In addition to this, it is necessary to acknowledge that the keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the Church, as many most clear and firm arguments testify. For Christ, speaking concerning the keys, matt. 18, 19, adds: *If two or three of you shall agree on earth*, etc. Therefore he grants the keys principally and immediately to the Church, just as also for this reason the Church has principally the right of calling. [For just as the promise of the Gospel belongs certainly and immediately to the entire Church, so the keys belong immediately to the entire Church, because the keys are nothing are nothing else than the office whereby this promise is communicated to every one who desires it, just as it is actually manifest that the Church has the power to ordain ministers of the Church. And Christ speaks in these words: *Whatsoever ye shall bind*, etc., and indicates to whom He has given the keys, namely, to the Church: *Where two or three are gathered together in My name*. Likewise Christ gives supreme and final jurisdiction to the Church, when He says: *Tell it unto the Church*.]” *The Smalcald Articles*, **Of the Power and Primacy of the Power**.24, *Triglotta*, p. 511, underscore added. Walther: Keys given principally and immediately the Church (*Kirche und Amt*, On the Ministry, Thesis VIII).

    Great spoil of the Reformation was the restoration of the proper teaching of the Gospel (the Ministry of the Church). ““We are also convinced of the fact that the great decisive battle of the Reformation, which our church fought against the papacy in the 16th century, centered in the doctrines of the church and the ministry, which have now again been called into question, and that the pure and clear teaching concerning them constitutes the precious spoils that our church gained from this warfare.” The Rev. Dr. C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, tr. J. T. Mueller, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 8. The Rev. Dr. C. F. W. *Church and Ministry* is the official position of the Missouri Synod on the questions of Church and Ministry. “... it was resolved to publish the manuscript ‘in our name and as our unanimous confession’ [that of the Missouri Synod].” The Rev. Dr. C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, tr. J. T. Mueller, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 9.

    The Restoration of the Proper Teaching that the Breath of Christ is Absolution through the Gospel slew the Papacy by breaking its grip over people’s consciences and fulfilled the prophecy by the prophet **Isaiah**. “... and He [Jesus] shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips.” **Isaiah 11:4**. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. 95**II Thessalonains 2:3-10**. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. 96“Listen to what St. Paul says to the Thessalonians [II Thess. 2:4]: ‘The Antichrist takes his seat in the temple of God.’ If now the pope is (and I cannot believe otherwise) the veritable Antichrist, he will not sit or reign in the devil’s stall, but in the temple of God. No, he will not sit where there are only devils and unbelievers, or where no Christ or Christendom exist. For he is an Antichrist and must thus be among Christians. And since he is to sit and reign there it is necessary that there be Christians under him. God’s temple is not the description for a pile of stones, but for the holy Christendom (I Cor. 3[:17]), in which he is to reign. The Christendom that now is under the papacy is truly the body of Christ and a member of it. If it is his body, then it has the true spirit, gospel, faith, baptism, sacrament, keys, the office of the ministry, prayer, holy Scripture, and everything that pertains to Christendom. So we are all still under the papacy and therefrom have received our Christian treasures.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 40, p. 232, underscore added.

    “We acknowledge not only that you have, with us, come from the true church and been washed and made clean in baptism through the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as St. Peter says here, but also that you are in the church and remain in it. Indeed, we say that you sit and rule in it as St. Paul prophesied in II Thessalonians 2 [:3–4], that the accursed Antichrist would sit (not in the cowshed), but in the temple of God. But you are no longer of the church, or members of the church, for in this holy church of God you are building your own new apostate church, the devil’s brothel with limitless whoredom, idolatry, and innovation, by which you corrupt those who have been baptized and redeemed along with yourselves. And you swallow them down through the jaws of hell into the abyss of hell itself, with a countless multitude, along with the terrible wailing and deep sorrow of those who see this with spiritual eyes and recognize it.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 41, 209, 210, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. 97**St. Matthew 24:14**. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. 98The Rev. Dr. Friedrich Bente, Historical Introductions tot he Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, *Concordia Triglotta*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921, p.23. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. 99***Revelation***, p. 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. 100The Papacy anathematizes the Gospel. “If anyone says that a man is justified either solely by the imputation of Christ's righteousness or solely by the remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and charity which is poured out into their hearts by the Holy Spirit and stays with them, or also that the grace by which we are justified is only the favor of God; let him be anathema. ... If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than trust in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this trust alone by which we are justified, let him be anathema.” Canons XI and XII of the Sixth Session of the Council of Trent, ***Examination of the Council of Trent, Part I***, Martin Chemnitz, p. 460.

     “**Trent, The Council of**. Convened, with long interruptions, between 1545 and 1563. Counted by the Roman Catholic Church among the ecumenical councils. strictly speaking, it was nothing more than a Romans synod, as neither the Protestant nor Greek sections of Christendom were represented. Nor was it even fairly representative of the Catholic Church of Europe, since the greater number of its members were Italian prelates. Nevertheless the Council of Trent is teh most important assembly in the history of the Latin Church. It marked the beginning of the Roman Catholic sect. It is the official answer to the Protestant Reformation.” *Concordia Cyclopedia*, eds. Ludwig Fuerbringer, Theodore Engelder, P. E. Kretzmann, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927, p. 769, s. v. “**Trent**, **The Council of**”. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. 101**Jeremiah 8:7**. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. 102**St. John 17:3**. “**113. What was the image of God?** The image of God consisted in this – A. That man *knew God* and was *perfectly happy* in such knowledge. 263 [Ye] have put on the new man, which is renewed in *knowledge* after the *image of Him that created him*. *Col. 3:10*B. That man was *perfectly holy* and blessed. 264 Put on the new man, which *after God* is created in *righteousness and true holiness*. *Eph. 4:24****.*** ... **114. Does man still bear the image of God?** Man *lost* the image of God when he *fell into sin*. In *believers*, a *beginning* of its renewal is made. Only in *heaven*, however, will this image be *fully* restored. 265 [Adam] begat a son *in his own likeness*, after his image. *Gen. 5:3****.*** ... 266 I will *behold Thy face in righteousness*; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, *with Thy likeness*. Ps. 17:15.” *The Small Catechism*, pp. 96, 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. 103Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 69, pp. 29, 35, 36, amplification in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. 104“And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a *son* in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth ... .” Here we see the doctrine of original sin already in Moses because Adam begat children in his sinful and godless image. “‘And he begot in his likeness after his image,’ ... The simple meaning, however, is this: Adam was crated after the image and similitude of God ... . He did not remain in this image but fell away from it through sin. And so Seth, who is born later on, is not born after the image of God but after that of his father Adam ... . But this is a likeness and image which was no created by God but was begotten from Adam. This image includes original sin and the punishment of eternal death, which was inflicted on Adam on account of his sin. But just as Adam recovered the lost image through faith in the future Seed, so Seth did also after he had grown up; for through His Word God stamped His likeness upon him.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. I, pp. 339, 340. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. 105“Now we beseech you, brethren, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our fathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.” **II Thessalonians 2:1-2**. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. 106The Roman Empire withheld or restrained the Papacy for his claim that he also possessed the civil sword. “Some indeed say, the grace of the Spirit, but others the Roman empire, to whom I most of all accede. Wherefore? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would have not have spoken obscurely, but plainly, that even now the grace of the Spirit, that is the gifts, withhold him. And otherwise he ought not to have come, if he was about to come when the gifts ceased; for they have long since ceased.” *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series,* Volume XIII, pp. 388, 389**.** [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. 107The Apostle St. Paul refers to the collapse of the Roman Empire and Caesar’s rule. After the demise of the Roman Empire, the Papacy publicly asserted its constant claim that it, too, held not only the spiritual sword of the Word but also the civil sword of the government. St. John Chrysostom says in sermon from around AD 400: “Some indeed say, the grace of the Spirit, but others the Roman empire, to whom I most of all accede. Wherefore? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would have not have spoken obscurely, but plainly, that even now the grace of the Spirit, that is the gifts, withhold him. And otherwise he ought not to have come, if he was about to come when the gifts ceased; for they have long since ceased.” *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series,* Volume XIII, pp. 388, 389**.** [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. 108The Spirit of Jesus’ Mouth is Absolution. “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me ,eve so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed in *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; Whose seover sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose seover *sins* ye retain, they are retained.” **St. John 20:21-23**. “Moreover, the power of the keys administers and presents the Gospel through absolution, which [proclaims peace to me and] is the true voice of the Gospel. {German text: The word of absolution speaks peace to me and is the Gospel itself.} Thus we also comprise absolution when we speak of faith, because *faith cometh by hearing*, as Paul says Rom. 10, 17. For when the Gospel is heard, and the absolution [*i.e.*, the promise of divine grace] is heard, the conscience is encouraged and receives consolation. (40) And because God truly quickens through the Word, the keys truly remit sins before God [here on earth sins are truly canceled also before God in heaven] according to Luke 10, 16: *He that heareth you heareth Me*. Wherefore the voice of one absolving must be believed not otherwise than we would believe a voice from heaven. (41) And absolution [that blessed word of comfort] properly can be called a sacrament of repentance, as also the more learned scholastic theologians speak. (42) Meanwhile this faith is nourished in a manifold way in temptations, through the declarations of the Gospel [the hearing of sermons, reading] and the use of the Sacraments. For these are [seals and] signs of [the covenant and grace in] the New Testament, *i.e.*, signs [of propitiation and] the remission of sins. They offer, therefore, the remission of sins, as the words of the [p. 263] Lord’s Supper clearly testify, Matt. 26, 26. 28: *This is My body, which is given for you. This is the cup of the New Testament*, etc. Thus faith is conceived and strengthened through absolution, through the hearing of the Gospel, through the use of the Sacraments, so that it may not succumb while it struggles with the terrors of sin and death. (43) This method of repentance is plain and clear, and increases the worth of the power of the keys and of the Sacraments, and illumines the benefit of Christ, and teaches us to avail ourselves of Christ as Mediator and Propitiator.” *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, **Article XII. (V.)**.39-43, *Triglotta*, pp. 261, 263, translation from the German in braces is mine.

     The Reformation restored the proper teaching of the Gospel that all believers received Absolution through the Gospel and not through the Papacy or any other man. “In addition to this, it is necessary to acknowledge that the keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the Church, as many most clear and firm arguments testify. For Christ, speaking concerning the keys, matt. 18, 19, adds: *If two or three of you shall agree on earth*, etc. Therefore he grants the keys principally and immediately to the Church, just as also for this reason the Church has principally the right of calling. [For just as the promise of the Gospel belongs certainly and immediately to the entire Church, so the keys belong immediately to the entire Church, because the keys are nothing are nothing else than the office whereby this promise is communicated to every one who desires it, just as it is actually manifest that the Church has the power to ordain ministers of the Church. And Christ speaks in these words: *Whatsoever ye shall bind*, etc., and indicates to whom He has given the keys, namely, to the Church: *Where two or three are gathered together in My name*. Likewise Christ gives supreme and final jurisdiction to the Church, when He says: *Tell it unto the Church*.]” *The Smalcald Articles*, **Of the Power and Primacy of the Power**.24, *Triglotta*, p. 511, underscore added. Walther: Keys given principally and immediately the Church (*Kirche und Amt*, On the Ministry, Thesis VIII).

     Great spoil of the Reformation was the restoration of the proper teaching of the Gospel (the Ministry of the Church). ““We are also convinced of the fact that the great decisive battle of the Reformation, which our church fought against the papacy in the 16th century, centered in the doctrines of the church and the ministry, which have now again been called into question, and that the pure and clear teaching concerning them constitutes the precious spoils that our church gained from this warfare.” The Rev. Dr. C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, tr. J. T. Mueller, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 8. The Rev. Dr. C. F. W. *Church and Ministry* is the official position of the Missouri Synod on the questions of Church and Ministry. “... it was resolved to publish the manuscript ‘in our name and as our unanimous confession’ [that of the Missouri Synod].” The Rev. Dr. C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, tr. J. T. Mueller, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 9.

     The Restoration of the Proper Teaching that the Breath of Christ is Absolution through the Gospel slew the Papacy by breaking its grip over people’s consciences and fulfilled the prophecy by the prophet **Isaiah**. “... and He [Jesus] shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips.” **Isaiah 11:4**. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. 109**II Thessalonains 2:3-10**, amplification in brackets and underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. 110St. Augustine, The City of God, Book 20, Chapter 7, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, *St. Augustin’s City of God and Christian Doctrine*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, reprinted May 1988, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, p. 427. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. 111**St. Matthew 7:13** [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. 112Jesus saith unto him, I am teh way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. 113**Isaiah 35:8**, **9**. Even though the Highway, i.e., the Gospel and faith, is in the world, Christians are as far removed from the dangers of the world, the flesh, and the devil, as the Infinite Majesty of the Person and Work of Christ for their Salvation. “Thou preparest a table fore me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.” **Psalm 23:6**. Even though Christians are in the midst of the world, the flesh, and the devil, seated across the table from them, they remain safe and blessed because in reality they are as far removed from them as the Infinite Majesty of the Person and Work of Christ. “He tha tdwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.” **Psalm 91:1-2**. The Secret Place of God is the Gospel because the Gospel must be revealed to men and cannot be ferreted out by reason. “I cannot just now find a word in German equivalent to ‘mysterion,’ and it will be well to retain the Greek form, as we have with many other words. It is equivalent to ‘secret,’ something hidden from our eyes, invisible to all, and generally pertaining to words. For instance, a saying not easily understood is said to contain a hidden meaning, a secret, a ‘mysterion’ – something is concealed therein. The concealment itself may properly be termed ‘mystery’; I call it a secret. What, then, constitutes the mysteries of God? Simply Christ Himself; that is faith and the Gospel concerning Christ. The whole Gospel teaching is beyond the grasp of our reason and our physical sense; it is hidden to that world. It can be apprehended only by faith; as Christ says in Matthew 11, 25: ‘I thank thee, O father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes.’ And as Paul tells us (1 Cor. 2:7-8): ‘We speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, which noneof the rulers of this world hath known.”” *The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther*, Vol. 3.2, pp. 70, 71.. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. 114**Revelation 13:11**. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. 115“Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.” **St. Mark 7:7** . [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. 116**St. Matthew 7:15**. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. 117“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” **St. Matthew 16:18**. “In all these passages Peter is the representative of the entire assembly of apostles [and does not speak for himself alone, but for all the apostles], as appears from the text itself. For Christ ask not Peter alone, but says: *Whom do ye say that I am?* And what is here said [to Peter alone] in the singular number: *I will give unto thee the keys; and whatsoever thou shalt bind*, etc., is elsewhere expressed [to their entire number], in the plural Matt. 18, 18: *Whatsoever ye shall bind* etc. And in John 20, 23: *Whosesoever sins ye remit*, etc. These words testify that the keys are given alike to all the apostles, and that all the apostles are alike sent forth [to preach]. ... Therefore it is necessary that in these passages Peter is the representative of the entire assembly of the apostles, and for this reason they do not accord to Peter any prerogative, aor superiority, or lordship [which he had, or was to have had, in preference to the other apostles]. ... However, as to the declaration: *Upon this rock I will build My Church*, certainly the Church has not been built upon the authority of man, but upon the ministry of the confession which Peter made, in which he proclaims that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He accordingly addresses him as a minister: *Upon this rock*, i.e. upon this ministry [Therefore he addresses him as a minister of this office in which this concession and doctrine is to be in operation, and says: *Upon this rock, i.e.,* this preaching ministry.]” *The Smalcald Articles:* **Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope**.23, 24, 25, *Triglotta*, p. 511. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. 118“The Roman Pontiff claims for himself [in the first place] that by divine right eh is [supreme] above all bishops and pastors [in all Christendom]. Secondly, he adds also that by divine right has both swords, *i.e.*, the authority also of bestowing and transferring kingdoms [enthroning and deposing kings, regulating secular dominions, etc.].” Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope.1-2, *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 503. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. 119**St. John 15:20**. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. 120Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 115, 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. 121**Romans 8:36**. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. 122To reject Christ in unbelief is to crucify Him again, as, for example, the Papacy does in the re-sacrifice of Christ in the Mass. “If they shall fall away, to rnew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* shame.” **Hebrews 6:6**. “‘In this divine sacrifice, which is celebrate in the Mass, that same Christ is contained and immolated in an unbloody manner who once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the cross; this sacrifice is truly propititaotry, and by emans thereo thi is effected, that we obtaine mercy and find grace in seasonable aid if we drae nigh uno God, contrite and penitent, with a sincere heart and upright faith, with fear and reverence. For the Lord, appeased by the oblation thereof and granting the grace and gift o penitence, forgives even heinous crimes and sins. For the Victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of the priests who then offerd Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different.’ (Council of Trent, Sess. XXII, cahp. 2.)” *Concordia Cyclopedia*, eds. Ludwig Fuerbringer, Theodore Engelder, P. E. Kretzmann, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927, p. 445, s.v. **Mass**. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. 123The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard, *Annotations on the Revelation of St. John the Theologian*, tr. Paul A. Rydecki, Malone: Reprstination Press, 2016, p. 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. 124That is following the lunar calendar. “Three and a half years of lunar months – 30 days per month – equals forty-two months and also equals 1,260 days.” The Rev. Dr. Louis A. Brighton, *Concordia Commentary ... Revelation*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 288.

     “According to Mark (13:1-26; cf. Mt. 24:1-31; Lk 21:5-28) this time period begins with Jesus’ own suffering, death, and resurrection and extends to his second coming. In other words, it is the entire church age, from Christ’s first advent to his second advent, when this world will end, the final judgment will take place, and then the new heaven and new earth will be the eternal home of God’s saints.” The Rev. Dr. Louis A. Brighton, *Concordia Commentary ... Revelation*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 289. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. 125*Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III, p. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. 126*Revelation*, p. 149. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. 127“God permits this to continue for ‘three days and a half’ (Rev. 11:9), a period of time not fixed and set by beast and the other enemies of God’s witnesses but by the Lord (Rev. 11:11).” The Rev. Daniel Poellet, *Revelation*, p. 147.

     God determines the length of Christian suffering for the sake of the Gospel. “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” **St. Matthew 24:22.**

     Christ Himself limited the length of His suffering as well as determining the time of His own death. The length of His suffering and the time of His death was not determined by the Romans or the Jews but by Himself because He is God. “18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” **St. John 10:18**. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. 128Stoeckhardt, *Revelation*, pp. 42, 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. 129**St. Luke 9:7**. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. 130*Annotations*, p. 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. 131*Revelation*, p. 51. At this point Dr. Stoeckhardt is commenting on the Antichrist described in **Revelation 13:3**. “And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.” [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. 132A blow to the head is lethal. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. 133***Revelation***, p. 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. 134**Isaiah 11:4**, underscore added. The Apostle St. Paul identifies this wicked man in **Isaiah 11:4** to be the Antichrist. “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming ... .” **II Thessalonians 2:8**, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. 135**St. John 20:21-23**. “This is a different kind of power that does not appear visibly before the world. Christ and the apostles were supplied with no other arms than the Word, and today ministers come armed not with weapons but with the Word. It is a breath that is heard and goes forth from the mouth, and nevertheless underneath it there is great power, the power to forgive sins. Where sin has been taken way, death has no more right and might ... ; the wrath of God and hell are closed up, and [there is] nothing but pure righteousness and life.” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 69, p. 410. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. 136*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pp. 757, 403, 404. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. 137*The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, **Article XII. (V.)**.39-40, *Triglotta*, p. 261, translation from the German in braces is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. 138**St. Luke 3:10-14**. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. 139“For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” **I Corinthians 11:19**. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. 140“According to Scripture, God in His righteous judgment punishes sin with sin. We read Rom. 1:24-28: ‘Wherefore [because of their idolatry] God also gave them up to uncleanness ... unto vile affections ... to a reprobate mind.’” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I, p. 491. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. 141Jesus is called the Destroyer in **Exodus 12:23**: “For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite *you*.” Jesus is called the Destroyer because He is God who determines life and death. “I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” **Revelation 1:18**. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. 142The Greek expression Jesus uses here for “his own” is “*ek* [out] *toon idiotoon* [his own things] *lalei* [is he speaking].” Evil is peculiar to fallen creation, whether it be an angel like the devil or men. Consequently, when Judas committed suicide, he went not to a place of God’s making but of his own making. “... Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” **Acts 1:25**. The expression for “his own place” is “*kat’* *idian*”. This expression “his own place” shares a common word, *idios*, with Jesus’ description of the devil speaking out of “his own”. *idios* “belonging to an individual” (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* *and other Early Christian Literature*, Walter Bauer, trs. William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, second edition, revised and augment, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 369). This expression shows that when men commit evil or perish, it is their own doing not God’s. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. 143“**V. 7. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. V. 8. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom teh Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming** ... .It is probably that Paul is referring to the fact that no bishop could attain to temporal power and honor as long as the Roman emperors could inaugurate persecutions. When, however, this restriction would be removed, the hidden opposition to Christ, the lawlessness, would break forth: And then the Lawless One will be revealed, whom teh Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and He shall make an end of him b the appearing of His coming. ... The revealing of Antichrist as such took place through the Reformation of Luther. When he brought forth the everlasting Gospel out of the darkness of centuries, it was an easy matter for every Bible Christian to recognize the antichristian character of the Roman papacy and to withdraw from its soul-destroying influence. But the end is not yet; for though Antichrist has now been revealed and exposed before all the world, and though the Lord Jesus, through the breath of His mouth, through the sword of the Spirit in the Word, is counteracting the work of Antichrist and destroying his work in many instances, the final destruction will come only at the appearance of His coming. When the Lord returns , visibly and with a full revelation of His divine glory, He will put an ene to the arrogance of Antichrist forever and give hm his punishment with all evil doers.” The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible, The New Testament,* Vol. II, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, pp. 362, 363. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. 144The Rev. George Stoeckhardt, *Wisdom for Today, Volume I*, tr. the Rev. Arthur E. Beck, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, p. 81. Dr. Stoeckhardt is commenting on the final plague that struck Pharaoh’s Egypt.

     “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy [*apolesai*] both soul and body in hell.” **St. Matthew 10:28**, transliterated Greek in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. 145**Philippians 2:7-11**. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. 146*Revelation*, pp. 151, 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. 147The Rev. Dr. J. T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, *A Handbook of Doctrinal Theology for Pastors, Teachers, and Laymen*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955, p. 317, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. 148**Isaiah 9:6**. Christ is called Father not because of His Person, He is the Son not the Father, but because of His Office to father men into life everlasting by His Passion. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. 149**Revelation 20:13-14**. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. 150*The City of God*, **Book XX**, **Chapter 6**, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, ed. Philip Schaff, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, rpr. May 1988, p. 426. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. 151Francis Pieper” Moreover, the essence of death is really the fact that if nothing intervenes, it is followed by the ‘second death’ (ho thanatos ho deuteros, Rev. 20:14), eternal torment.” *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III, p. 510. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. 152The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard, *Eleven Easter and Pentecost Sermons*, pp. 74, 75.

     “Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) has rightly been classified the ‘third preeminent theologian after Luther and Chemnitz.’ ... However, while Gerhard is best remembered for his great dogmatics, the *Loci Theologici*, Gerhard produced a number of devotional volumes and preach many sermons to the ‘common man.’ The sermons in this volume were apparently preached when Gerhard was 31 years old and already superintendent at Heldburg and a Doctor of Divinity.” **Foreword** from *Seven Christmas Sermons*. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. 153**St. Luke 13:23-30**. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)