**The Festival of Christmas Eve,**

24 December 2020.

 *Concordia Lutheran Mission,*

Terrebonne, Oregon.

**“God was Born of the Virgin St. Mary to Give Men a Birth unto Life Everlasting.”**

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, [the[[1]](#footnote-1)1] Virgin shall conceive,

and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.[[2]](#footnote-2)2

**Isaiah 7:14.**

**Introduction**.

This remarkable passage teaches us that God Himself was born of the Virgin St. Mary. But why would God be born of a woman? God obviously does not need it for Himself; after, He is God and has no need of any such human experiences. If God did not do it for Himself, for whom did He do it? God did it for us and for all men for the salvation of all men.

 God was born of the Virgin St. Mary for us and for all men in order to give us and all men a pure birth. After the fall of Adam, men are not born purely but impurely and fatally because of sin. Men only became mortal because of sin. God, however, out of Pure Mercy endeavored to deliver man from his lethal birth by Himself being born of a woman in order to give men a pure birth unto life everlasting.

 This Work of God, of course, included His Passion.[[3]](#footnote-3)3 By His Passion, Christ wiped clean all guilt of sin and, therefore, death. After that, Christ filled up the slates of mankind with the Righteousness of God forever pleasing to God.

 God was born of the Virgin St. Mary to give men a birth unto life everlasting.

**I. God was Born of the Virgin St. Mary in order to Give Men a Birth unto Life Everlasting.**

**A. Since the fall of Adam men are born mortal because of sin.**

God is concerned even to the smallest detail in order to care for his creation, namely, mankind. After the fall of Adam into sin, all men are conceived and born in sin. David writes:

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.[[4]](#footnote-4)4

 This condition is a disaster of the first order. All men are doomed to fail out of the box because of their defective conception and birth. No amount of good works will make up for the fact that they wrong from the outset, from the moment of their coming into being, from which nothing good can or does come.

 Because men are conceived in sin because of the fall of Adam, all men are conceived mortal. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.[[5]](#footnote-5)5

**B. God was born purely of the Virgin St. Mary in order to give men a pure birth unto life everlasting.**

*The remedy for a sinful conception and birth is simply beyond the reach of any man because no man can return again to his conception and birth to correct the matter*.[[6]](#footnote-6)6This truth shows again that a man cannot effect his own redemption after the fall of Adam into sin. Rather, God Himself must intervene and undergo human birth in order to give to fallen men a lively and not mortal birth. Consequently, the prophet Isaiah writes:

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, [the[[7]](#footnote-7)7]Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.[[8]](#footnote-8)8

 In the first place, God’s Birth of the Virgin St. Mary is miraculous, otherwise it would not be a sign from God. Finally, God was born of the Virgin St. Mary in order to purify the sinful human nature, which is propagated by the normal manner of human conception and birth.[[9]](#footnote-9)9 Luther writes of Christ’s Birth for us and for all men:

Christ is born for you and ... his birth is yours, and come to pass for your benefit. For the Gospel teaches that Christ was born for our sake and that he did everything and suffered all things for our sake ... . Christ has a pure, innocent, holy birth. Man has an impure, sinful, damned birth, as David says in Psalm 51[:5] ... . There is simply no remedy for this except through the pure birth of Christ. ... Christ willed to be born so that we might be born in different manner ... . In this manner Christ takes to himself our birth and absorbs it in his birth; he present us with his birth so that we become pure and new in it, as if it were our own, so that every Christian might rejoice in this birth of Christ and glory in it no less than if he, too, like Christ, had been born bodily of Mary.1[[10]](#footnote-10)0

 Finally, no guilt of sin remains to contaminate this new birth because Atoned for all sins on the Cross.

 Now from the womb to everlasting, we and all men have kept perfectly God’s commandments, without the least taint of sin on account of Christ’s Passion, because Christ has already kept them for us from the womb to life everlasting. Consequently, men enjoy a pure birth because Christ enjoyed it for them.

**II. Christ Gives Men Rebirth through the Gospel.**

**A. Christ gives men rebirth through the Gospel, the Great Gift of Christmas.**

 Through the Great Gift of Christmas, i.e., the Gospel, Christ gives men rebirth. The Apostle St. John writes:

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.1[[11]](#footnote-11)1

 Christ’s Pure Birth Christ gives to men through the Gospel. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

... in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.1[[12]](#footnote-12)2

**B. Christ gives life everlasting through the Gospel.**

The Great Christmas Gift of the Gospel gives unto men life everlasting and the resurrection of the body and all the gift of the boundless treasures of heaven when Christ returns again in glory.The Apostle St. Paul writes of the Great Christmas Gift of the Gospel:

But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; That being justified by his grace, we should b e made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.1[[13]](#footnote-13)3

Luther writes of the Christmas Gift of the Gospel:

Rom. 8:32: “He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also give us all things with Him?” These words are beyond evaluation and incomprehensible. The Gift that has been given is very great, except that it is not yet revealed. Eternal life is not as great as Christ. From the very magnitude of the Gift I have received I perceive the greatness of the gift which God has yet to give.1[[14]](#footnote-14)4

**Conclusion**.

 This passage from Isaiah is remarkable. It shows us that God undertook to be born of a woman in order to give to us and all men a pure human birth.

 From this pure human birth springs life everlasting, the resurrection of the body, and all the riches and everlasting gifts of God’s Everlasting Kingdom.

 ***Amen.***

1. **1“... literally, ‘the virgin,’ ... .” The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Old Testament*, Vol. II, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924, p. 300.** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **2The translation from the Hebrew in brackets and capitalization of some of the nouns and pronouns are mine.**  [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3“Gerhard: ‘Although in many passages of Scripture the work of redemption is ascribed to Christ’s death and the shedding of His blood, yet this must by no means be understood *exclusive*, as if by it the holy life of Christ were excluded from the work of redemption. But it is done for the reason that nowhere does the fact that the Lord has loved and redeemed us shine forth more clearly than in His Passion, death, and wounds, as the devout old teachers says; the death of Christ is, as it were, the last line and complete, the [telos], the end and perfection, of the entire obedience, as the Apostle says in Phil. 2:8. In this merit it is altogether impossible to separate the active from the passive obedience.” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 376, footnote 81, transliteration of the Greek in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 4**Psalm 51:5**. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 5**Romans 5:12**. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 6Nicodemus made this point when he was struck by the seeming preposterousness of Jesus’ statement that a man must be reborn if he were to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. “Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” **St. John 3:4**. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 7“... literally, ‘the virgin,’ ... .” The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Old Testament*, Vol. II, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924, p. 300. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 8**Isaiah 7:14.** The translation from the Hebrew in brackets and capitalization of some of the nouns and pronouns are mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 9“In consequence of His supernatural conception Christ was free from both original sin ... and actual sin ... . This truth we derive from all passages that describe Christ’s absolute sinlessness, Heb. 7, 26. 27; 1 John 3, 5, as well as from those which affirm that He became man not after the order of nature ..., but through the Holy Ghost, Matt. 1, 18; Luke 1, 34. Since Christ did not descend from sinful seed, he was free from hereditary corruption ... and from hereditary guilt ..., which is imputed to all men begotten of sinful flesh, John 3, 6; Rom. 5, 16. 19.” The Rev. Dr. J. T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 260. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 10Marin Luther*, Luther’s Works*, Vol. 52, pp. 14, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 11**St. John 3:5**. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 12**I Corinthians 5:15**. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 13**Titus 3:4-7**. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 14*Luther’s Works*, Vol. 28, p. 247. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)