**The Festival of Christmas,**

25 December 2022,

 *Concordia Lutheran Mission,*

 Terrebonne, Oregon.

**“God was Born of the Virgin St. Mary to give to Men the Gift of Life Everlasting.”**

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

**St. John 1:14**.

**Introduction**.

 This passage from St. John’s Gospel shows us once again that God was born on Christmas. God was not born in the sense that He came into existence, but rather that He became incarnate, was born a man.[[1]](#footnote-1)1

 God was born of the Virgin St. Mary in order shoulder the burdens of all men, save them from their sins, and give to them life everlasting.[[2]](#footnote-2)2 The gift Christ gives through His Birth, Life, Death, and Resurrection for us and for all men, is salvation from sin and, thereby, life eternal. From the Gift of Christ flow all other rich and everlasting gifts from God which we will enjoy forever.

 God was born in Bethlehem of the Virgin St. Mary in order to should the burdens of men, discharge those burdens, save from sin, and, thereby, give them the Gift of life everlasting.

**I. God was Born of the Virgin St. Mary in order to Save Men from Sin and Give Men Life Everlasting.**

**A. Man forfeited the gift of life by his sin.**

It’s not like God had not already given to man the gift of life. In the beginning, God gave man the gift of life when He created Him. Man, however, forfeited the gift of life by his sin. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.[[3]](#footnote-3)3

 In the midst of His Passion, Jesus points out that man forfeited the gift of life:

They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored *that* which I took not away.[[4]](#footnote-4)4

Notice Jesus says He did not take men’s live because He said, “I took not away”. Jesus says that because men had forfeited their lives by their sins, God had not taken it but, again, men had forfeited their lives by their sin.

 God gave men the gift of life in the beginning, but men forfeited the gift of life by their sin.

**B. God is born of the Virgin St. Mary to save from sin and give life everlasting.**

God, however, did not leave it at that; he did not leave man to perish in his sin. Rather God sent His Only-Begotten Son into the flesh to bear our burdens, and be our Savior, and restore life everlasting. The Apostle St. John writes:

And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.[[5]](#footnote-5)5

 God sent His Only-Begotten Son into the flesh not full of wrath, hellfire, and brimstone, for sinners, but “full of grace and truth.” Again, the Apostle St. John writes of the purpose of the coming of the Son of God in the flesh:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in his name should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world should through saved through him.[[6]](#footnote-6)6

 God restored everlasting life to men by Himself, as a man, shouldering all the burdens and obligations as a man to discharge them for them. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.[[7]](#footnote-7)7

In other words, Jesus placed Himself under the commandments and fulfilled them for us. Discharging these responsibilities for us Jesus did from the womb until His Death on the Cross. King David records Christ’s words in the midst of His Passion wherein He fulfilled the commandments for us:

I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou *art* my God from my mother’s belly.[[8]](#footnote-8)8

Jesus worshiped God from the womb. No other man has done that since the fall of man into sin. Since the fall into sin, no man worships God from his conception. King David writes:

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.[[9]](#footnote-9)9

Jesus’ gift to us is a start on a new life that lasts forever. Luther writes of Christ’s Work for us:

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

 Jesus’ entire life was geared toward giving men fallen in sin a new life, everlasting life. The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes:

Jerome Kromayer (professor of theology at Leipzig, d. 1670) ... says: “Christ passed through all stages of our life in order that He might thoroughly heal our sinful conception and birth.”1[[11]](#footnote-11)1

 Jesus also passed through the stage of human life, which, since the fall of man into sin, now includes human death1[[12]](#footnote-12)2 in order that He might deliver us from death. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.1[[13]](#footnote-13)3

 God was born of the Virgin St. Mary to save from sin and give to men the gift of life, of life everlasting.

**II. God Gives the Gift of Life Everlasting through the Gospel.**

**A. The Gift of Christ is given through the Gospel.**

God’s Gift of Christ born for us God gives to men through the Gospel. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. ... And he gave some, apostles, and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastor and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.1[[14]](#footnote-14)4

The Gift of the Ministry of the Gospel Christ gives to men.1[[15]](#footnote-15)5 Through the Gift of the Gospel men are given the Gift of Christ and His Passion. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.1[[16]](#footnote-16)6

 The Gift of Christ born for us God gives to us through the Gospel.

**B. The Gift of life everlasting and all everlasting gifts come through Gospel.**

Through the Gospel we gain the Gift of life everlasting. For through the Gospel we become sons of God, as the Apostle Paul states. God goes on forever. We, His sons, must, therefore, go on forever with Him in life everlasting otherwise we could not be called sons of God.1[[17]](#footnote-17)7

 Through Gift of Christ in the Gospel comes also all gifts and good gifts forever. Luther writes:

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 [Christ] I perceive the greatness of the gift which God has yet to give.1[[18]](#footnote-18)8

**Conclusion**.

 God was born of the Virgin St. Mary in order to give men life eternal. God had originally give men life eternal but men forfeited that gift by their sin. But God, out of pure mercy and grace, was born of the Virgin St. Mary in order to shoulder the burdens of men, discharge those obligations, save, and give life everlasting through the Passion of Christ.

 The Gift of the Passion of Christ is given to men through the Gospel, wherein men gain the gift of the remissions of sins, salvation, life everlasting, and the resurrection of the body when Christ returns again glory on the Last Day.

  ***Amen.***

1. **1“And the decree of the Council of Chalcedon [A.D. 451], as cited by Evagrius, lib. 2, cap. 4, reads thus: ‘Following, then, the holy fathers, we confess one and the same Son, our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and we all set forth with one voice that the same is perfect in deity and the same perfect in humanity; that the same is truly God and truly man, consisting of a rational soul and a body; that He is consubstantial with the Father as regards the deity, and that same is consubstantial with us, according to the humanity; that He is in all respects like us, excepting sin; that He was begotten before the world out of the Father according to the deity, but that the same person in the last days born for us and for our salvation of Mary, the virgin and mother of God, according to the humanity ... .’” Catalog of Testimonies, *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 1109, amplification in brackets and underscore added.**  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **2“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Romans 4:4-5.** [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3**Romans 6:23**. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 4**Psalm 69:4**. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 5**St. John 1:14** [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 6**St. John 3:16-17**. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 7**Romans 4:4-5**. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 8**Psalm 22:10**. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 9**Psalm 51:5**. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 10Marin Luther*, Luther’s Works*, Vol. 52, pp. 14, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 11The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 306. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 12Jesus died a truly human death because His body and soul separated, as do all men’s when they die. “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” **St. John 19:30**. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 13**I Corinthians 15:54**, **55-57**. “And death itself serves this purpose, namely, to abolish this flesh of sin, that we may rise absolutely new. Neither is there now in the death of the believer, since by faith he has overcome the terrors of death, that sting and sense of wrath of which Paul speaks 1 Cor. 15, 56: *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law*. This strength of sin, this sense of wrath, is truly punishment as long as it is present; without this sense of wrath, death is not properly punishment.” *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, **Article VI: Of Confession and Satisfaction**.56. 57, *Triglotta*, p. 299. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 14**Ephesians 4:8**, **10-12**. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 15The Ministry of the Gospel is God’s Word and Sacraments. “But let us speak of the word *liturgy*. This word does not properly signify a sacrifice, but rather the public ministry, and agrees aptly with our belief, namely, that one minister who consecrates tenders the body and blood of the Lord to the rest of the people, just as one minister who preaches tenders the Gospel to the people, as Paul says, I Cor. 4, 1: *Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, i.e.* of the Gospel and the Sacraments. And 2 Cor. 5, 20: *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in God’s stead, be ye reconciled to God*. Thus the term *leitourgia* agrees aptly with the ministry.” The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*,* **Article XXIV. (XII.): Of the Mass**, *Of the Term Mass*.80, 81, *Triglotta*, p. 411. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 16**Galatians 3:26-27**. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 17For this reason of eternal life Jesus is called in **Isaiah 9:6** “the Everlasting Father” because He fathers us into life everlasting by His Passion. The Prophet Isaiah does not called Jesus the Everlasting Father according to His Person because Jesus is the Everlasting Son according to His Person, but, rather, He calls Jesus the Everlasting Father according to His Work because by His Work, i.e., His Passion, He fathers men into life everlasting. Hence, by His Passion, Jesus is the Everlasting Father of men. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 18Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 28, p. 247, amplification in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)