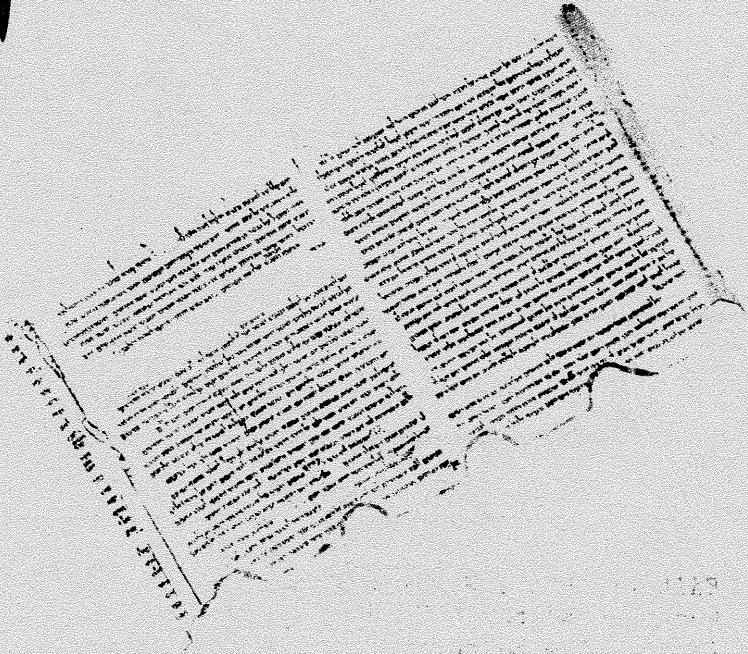




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## FOREWORD

We are pleased to bring you in this issue of the Quarterly the 1982 Reformation Lectures delivered by Dr. Raymond Surburg, professor of Biblical Hermeneutics and Old Testament Interpretation, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. These lectures were delivered on October 28-29, 1982, at Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

The general topic is LUTHER AND THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT and is divided into three lectures.

Lecture I: Hermeneutical Basis, Sources, and Kinds of Christological Data in Luther's Works

Lecture II: Luther's Christological Views from Genesis to Solomon

Lecture III: Luther's Christological Views from Solomon to the Postexilic Writings

The two reactors were Professor John Brug, professor at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, and Professor Rudolph E. Honsey, professor at Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary.

Due to the length of the lectures, we have included the footnotes and the reactor's comments in a supplement which is included with this issue.

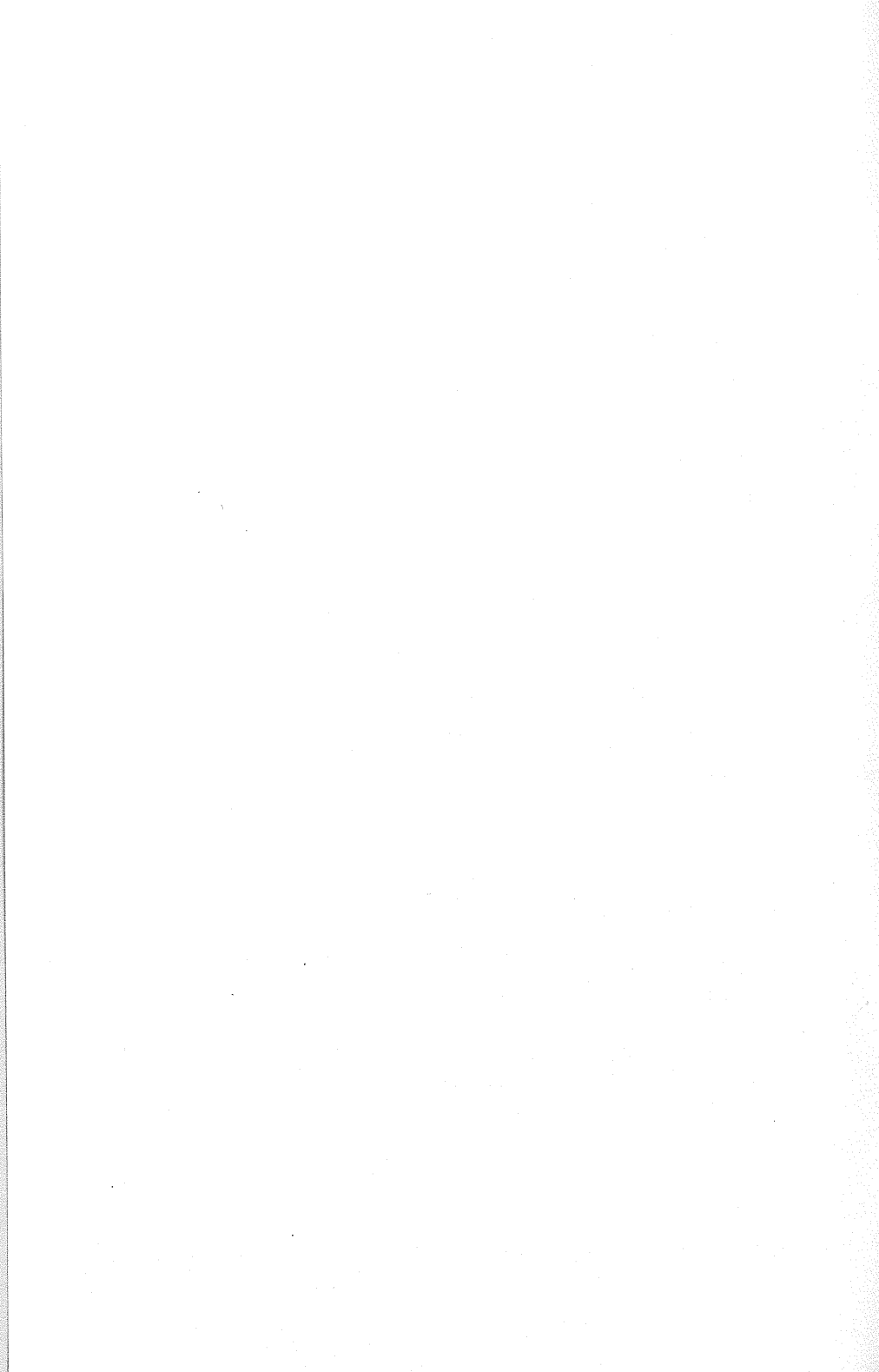


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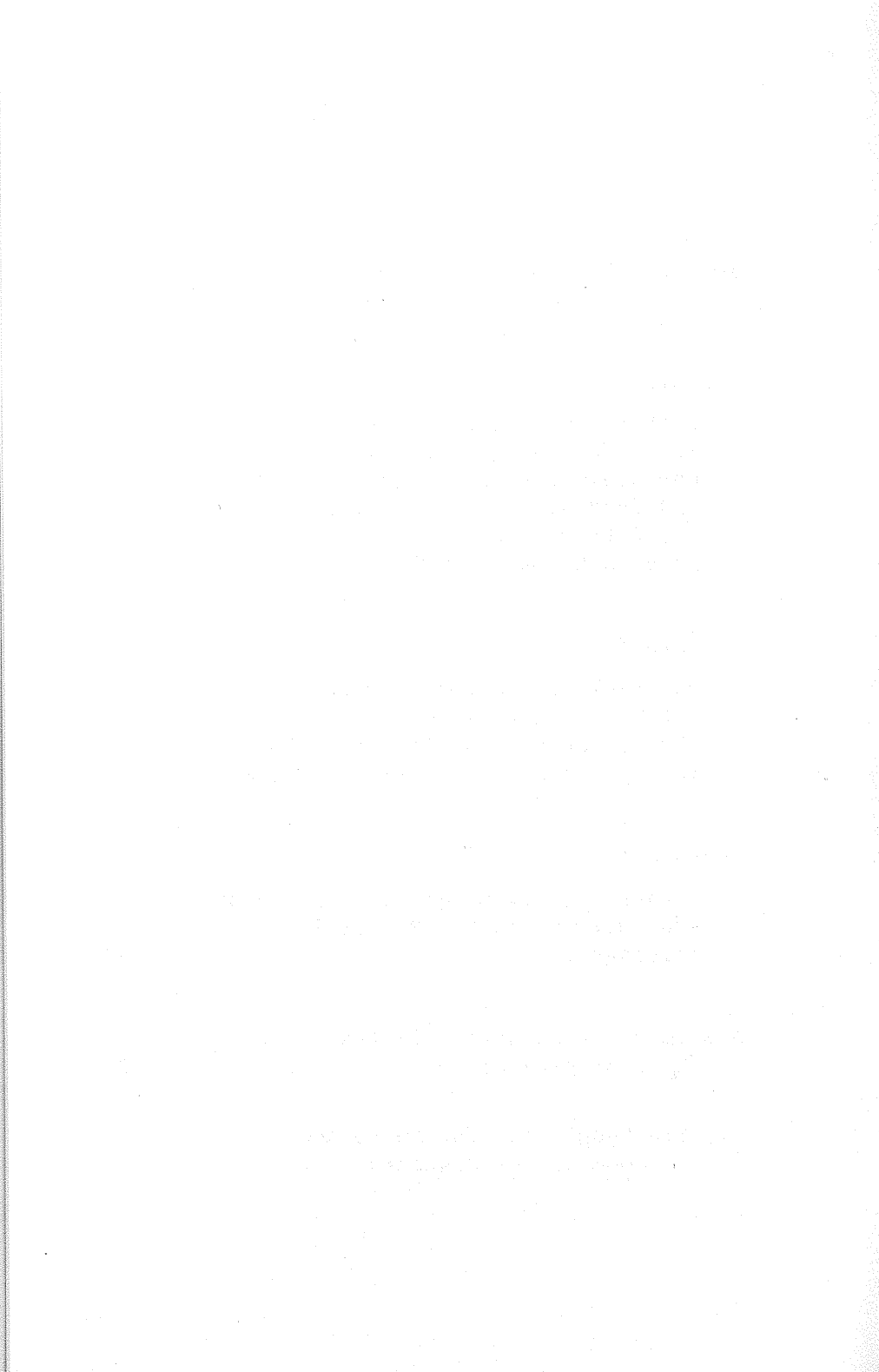
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## LECTURE I

Back to Luther! - The Hermeneutical Basis for Luther's Old Testament Christology - Sources for Luther's Old Testament Christological Views - The Different Kinds of Christological Data in Luther's Works

### I. Introduction: Back to Luther!

1 "Back to Luther!" has been the battle cry which during the last 450 years has periodically been sounded by faithful men in the Lutheran Church when they witnessed the fact that many so-called Lutherans in Europe and America espoused a form of religion which represented serious departures from the Lutheran theology taught by Luther and the Book of Concord.<sup>1</sup> Thus in 1817 Klaus Harms (1778-1853), convinced that the Church in Germany had left the faith of the Reformation, published for the tercentenary jubilee of 1817, together with Luther's Ninety-five Theses, 95 of his own against Rationalism and the attempted union between Lutherans and Reformed. Through pietism and the subsequent reaction to it by rationalism the doctrine of justification by faith and the bright light of the Gospel had been removed from the pulpits and the teaching seats of the theological departments of the German universities.

2 "Back to Luther!" was also sounded in the eastern part of the United States by those who reacted against the rationalism and Calvinism that characterized "American Lutheranism," fathered by S. S. Schumucker, B. Kurtz, S. Sprecher and other leaders of the General Synod. These men developed

and promoted a theology which was "essentially Calvinistic, Methodistic, Puritanic, indifferentistic, and unionistic, hence anything but true Lutheran."<sup>2</sup> A return to Lutheran theology was promoted by Charles Porterfield Krauth, who exercised a great influence in bringing back the General Synod to Luther and consequently to Lutheran and Biblical doctrine.<sup>3</sup>

3 "Back to Luther!" was the cry also sounded in the second half of the nineteenth century in the Midwest of the United States by one of the representatives of confessional Lutheranism, namely, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. At great expense the latter Lutheran denomination published a revised edition of the Walch edition of the works of Martin Luther (1880-1910), under the editorship of F. Hoppe. C.F.W. Walther, F. Pieper, A. Hoenecke and other Lutheran scholars and leaders of the Synodical Conference frequently in their published writings set forth the Scriptural views of Luther. At the theological seminaries and teacher training institutions professors and instructors gave evidence of great familiarity with Luther's writings.

4 The sterility of rationalism and the theological waywardness of pietism in Germany had led to a reaction and was responsible for the publication of the Erlangen edition of the works of Martin Luther, which in turn fostered a revival of confessional Lutheranism. Cämmerer wrote concerning this "Back to Luther" movement as follows:

The revived interest in Luther led to the publication of the Erlangen edition of the works of Luther and the advocacy of confessional Lutheranism. The controversies and the theological currents engendered by these studies developed a huge literature on



doctrinal and historical themes dealing with Luther and climaxed in the definitive critical edition of Luther's works (Weimer, 1883ff).<sup>4</sup>

5 In the twentieth century there occurred another "Back to Luther" movement in Europe and this effort endeavored to discern the motives of the primitive Lutheran concepts introduced into the German Church by Luther's co-workers and successors. In Sweden there was a Luther renaissance spurred on by the pessimism of Kierkegaard. At Lund especially a great interest was developed on the part of a group of scholars involved in Luther research.<sup>5</sup> In America this movement was paralleled by M. Reu of Wartburg Seminary who did considerable Luther research.<sup>6</sup>

6 Between 1955 and 1976 a 55-volume edition of Luther's works, based on the Weimer critical edition, was produced in English translation by the Fortress Press and Concordia Publishing House as a joint venture, under the editorship of T. Lehman and J. Pelikan.

7 The next two years will witness the celebration of two Luther anniversaries: the 500th birthday of Martin Luther (November 10, 1483) and the 450th anniversary of the publication of the German Bible (1534). Undoubtedly, these two coming anniversaries will witness the publication of books, monographs, scholarly journal articles dealing with Luther as a theologian, German citizen, and translator of the Bible and the creator of the New High German language.

8 "Back to Luther!" is a cry which is needed in Lutheranism again today, especially in view of the fact that a higher-critical approach to the Bible has been adopted in most Lutheran seminaries in America and Canada, Europe and in other lands where Lutherans have established seminaries.

9 The historical-critical method with its different kinds of criticism, such as a radical kind of literary criticism, form, redaction, tradition, contents and even structural criticism, is in vogue today and has resulted in either the Biblical text and its message being redefined or abandoned entirely. The results of the employment of higher criticism have been the emasculation of traditional Lutheran teaching on a number of important Biblical doctrines.<sup>7</sup> The proponents of the historical-critical method have made it impossible for the average Christian and Bible reader and pastor to know what the Bible really teaches since they do not have the expertise to know and apply the intricacies of these different and sometimes even contradictory types of criticism.<sup>8</sup> Because of the presuppositions which underlie and control the various kinds of criticisms now employed and defended by Lutheran scholars there has developed a great gap between Luther's understanding of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament, and the understanding of modern liberal Lutheran scholars. Comparing Luther's understanding of the relationship of the Old and New Testaments to each other with that currently held in Lutheran circles shows that the difference between the founder of Lutheranism and many of his twentieth century followers is quite pronounced.<sup>9</sup>

10 One of the great tragic results of the employment of the historical-critical method as the system of interpretation of the Bible has been the severing of the Old Testament from the New Testament. Already in 1913 Franklin Revere in his Christology made this judgment:

The modern critical view of the Old Testament largely or entirely dissevers the Old Testament from any specific connection with the New Testament, placing it on the same line with

other pre-Christian religions, which also in their own way were a preparation for Christianity.<sup>10</sup>

- 11 The same scholar continued by asserting:

The view consistently leads to the denial of the specific character as a divine revelation of the New Testament, as well as of Christianity. The relation of the New Testament to the Old is such that both stand or fall together. We cannot discount the Redeemer from the Old Testament predictions which he came to fulfill.<sup>11</sup>

- 12 Already a century ago Oehler in his introductory lectures to Old Testament Theology called attention to the general neglect of the Old Testament as a result of attacks made upon it.<sup>12</sup> A perusal of Westermann's Christ in the Old Testament or articles in Old Testament Hermeneutics will show that a great gulf exists now between Luther's handling of the Old Testament and that of modern critical Lutheran scholarship.<sup>13</sup>

- 13 Luther realized that the Old Testament was important for religious knowledge and belief: Thus he wrote:

We should let the worthless babblers go who despise the Old Testament and say it is of no further use, when, as a matter of fact, we must derive the ground of our faith from it alone. For God sent the prophets to the Jews to bear witness to the coming of Christ. Therefore the apostles everywhere convinced and convicted the Jews out of their own Scriptures that this was the Christ. Consequently, the books of Moses and the prophets are Gospel too,

since they first preached and wrote about Christ what the apostles afterward preached and wrote about Him.<sup>14</sup>

14 For Luther Christ was the heart and center of the Scriptures. The locus that treats of Christ's person and work is known in systematic theology as "Christology." In these Reformation lectures the essayist will employ the term Christology in its most elemental sense, namely, of any teaching about Christ. The theological literature reveals the fact that scholars ascribe differing contents to this term. Doctrinal works use the word "Christology" to refer to the person and work of Christ. John Haas in the 1899 edition of The Lutheran Cyclopaedia defined this term thus: "Christology is the doctrine of the person of Christ in distinction from his life and work."<sup>15</sup> By contrast, Wilhelm Pauck defined it like this:

Indeed, the Christian religion cannot be theologically understood except by a rigorous Christocentrism. Christology is the name for the theological interpretation of the meaning of the belief in Christ, it is the doctrine of the person and work of Christ.<sup>16</sup>

15 The latter definition is that also for Christology in the writings of F. Pieper,<sup>17</sup> A. Hoenecke,<sup>18</sup> and J. Schaller.<sup>19</sup> Our understanding of the term Christology will be that which can be found in the orthodox theologians, which includes the following topics: 1. The person of Christ; 2. The two states of Christ; 3. The work of Christ as shown by His threefold office of prophet, priest and king. There are statements made about Christ which take the reader into other loci of systematic theology.

16 The Old Testament does not have the same amount of Christological data as does the New Testament. The same amount of detail and information that the New Testament has is not found in the Old Testament. Most treatises which deal with Christology, whether following the narrower or the wider usage of the term "Christology," rely for their proof texts heavily on the New Testament Scriptures.<sup>20</sup> Since some Lutherans have read Christ out of the Old Testament of the Old Covenant,<sup>21</sup> these lectures dealing with Luther and the Christology of the Old Testament may prove helpful to show how Luther consistently discovered Christ in the Old Testament Bible. It will be revealing to those who call themselves Lutherans to be shown that the Reformer of Wittenberg categorically rejected the notion that Christ was not known to the Old Testament believers.

## II. Luther and the Christology of the Old Testament

17 In the theology of Luther Christology played an important role. Haas claimed that "whatever growth Christology had in the Lutheran Church had its roots in Luther himself. He, though, counting only four great ecumenical councils (Erlangen edition, 25, p. 294) accepted the results of the Church's former christological work, and the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian creeds."<sup>22</sup>

### 1. The Presuppositions for Luther's Christological Understanding of the Whole Bible. Old and New Testaments.

18 Discovering Christ in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation was a principle of interpretation that Ramm claimed was distinctively Lutheran as compared with Calvin's hermeneutics.<sup>23</sup> To appreciate

really the nature of the world-shaking character of the Protestant Reformation with its emphasis on the four solas: sola Scriptura, sola gratia, sola fidei, and solus Christus, it is necessary to realize that the Lutheran Reformation was intimately connected with a hermeneutical revolution that was foundational for Luther's Copernican theological revolution. Many students of the sixteenth century Reformation, while recognizing the religious nature of the Protestant Reformation, have not appreciated the fact that, above all, the movement inaugurated by Luther was a hermeneutical revolution of the first magnitude. Luther's ultimate break with Rome was made possible by the discovery of new principles in interpretation, which were forgotten or unknown to the Medieval Church. Only as these new principles were applied was Luther enabled to help European Christianity to return to the teachings of Christ and His apostles. Luther's principles of interpretation were responsible for the setting forth of a new and true conception of Christianity. Thus Karl Holl observed:

The battle with the Roman Catholic Church which Luther initiated with the nailing of the theses, developed at the same time into a battle concerning the understanding of the Bible. Luther would not complete it without developing his principles of interpretation.<sup>24</sup>

19 That Luther's accomplishments in the field of hermeneutics were not appreciated by Roman Catholic savants is, of course, understandable. In fact, Rome has denounced Luther's views in interpretation as having been detrimental to the faith of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus Monsignor Patrick O'Hara in his book, The Facts about Luther, portrayed the Wittenberg reformer as perverting the Scriptures. Those individuals using Luther's

German Bible are depicted as being prevented from correctly understanding God's revelation, as it is found in Christ and His Church.<sup>25</sup> Even a Protestant scholar like Terry in his historical sketch of the history of hermeneutical theory failed to appreciate Luther adequately.<sup>26</sup> Gilbert would be another example of a scholar who did not comprehend the real nature and significance of Luther's hermeneutical accomplishments. This is clear from the following judgment:

His (i.e. Luther's) exposition does not mark progress as compared with that of the medieval church, notably in its good sense and practical character, but the best, most original element in his views are found throughout his writings as almost wholly unapplied truths.<sup>27</sup>

Gilbert certainly does not have a firsthand acquaintance with Luther's writings.

20 By contrast, Ramm has presented a much better and balanced analysis of Luther's hermeneutical principles.<sup>28</sup> The following is based upon the essayist's materials as given in his article: "The Significance of Luther's Hermeneutics for the Protestant Reformation."<sup>29</sup> Foundational for Luther's Christology are the following interpretive principles:

21 The Bible is the supreme and final authority in theological matters. Consequently the Scriptures were above the authority of the Roman Church or any church for that matter. A traditional Roman Catholic theologian would appeal to Scripture, reason, Thomistic philosophy, councils, creeds and Fathers. However, it was the Reformer's stance that the Bible in its "teachings cannot be countenanced nor qualified nor subordinated to ecclesiastical authorities whether of persons or documents."<sup>30</sup>

22 The psychological principle was another one of Luther's basic principles of interpretation. He contended that there were certain spiritual qualifications required by the Biblical interpreter. In his Table Talk Luther is reported to have said: "We ought not to criticize, or judge the Scriptures by our mere reason, but diligently, with prayer, meditate thereon, and seek their meaning."<sup>31</sup> Again Luther supposedly said: "The Bible should be regarded with wholly different eyes from those with which we view other productions."<sup>32</sup>

23 A third principle insisted upon by Luther was the literal principle. The Reformer of Wittenberg and other Reformers revolted against the four-fold system of interpretation employed by the scholastics. The latter had worked out their hermeneutics into two divisions, the literal and the spiritual. The spiritual was divided into three: an allegorical, anagogical, and the tropological. Luther insisted upon the primacy of the literal meaning of the text. Briggs cited Luther as saying: "Every word should be allowed to stand in its natural meaning, and that should not be abandoned unless faith forces to it."<sup>33</sup>

24 Luther made possible his insistence on the literal meaning of the text by returning to the original meaning of the text as found in the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. The Vulgate had been the basis for the Roman Catholic's text of Scripture.<sup>34</sup> The latter position was canonically established by the Council of Trent (1545-63), a stance reaffirmed by the Vatican Council of 1870. The Roman Catholic held that the Latin translation was true and trustworthy in giving the correct meaning of the original Biblical text. Thus Genesis 3:15 in the Vulgate ascribed the work of redemption to Mary and is the passage advanced by those who teach that Mary is



coredemptrix. Luther insisted on the basis of the Hebrew that the christological truth that Christ would destroy the Devil's power could not be attributed to Mary.<sup>35</sup>

25 The historical-grammatical approach was intimately connected with the literal interpretation of Scripture.<sup>36</sup> The historical-grammatical is inseparable from the literal principle. The exegete must give attention to grammar, to the times, circumstances, and to the conditions of the writer of a Biblical book, as well as to the context of the passage. The rejection of the allegorical method, which controlled Christendom for over a thousand years, was a high water mark of Luther's hermeneutical revolution.<sup>37</sup>

26 Another hermeneutical principle advanced by Luther was the one labeled by Ramm as "the sufficiency principle."<sup>38</sup> In Luther's day the devout and competent Christian was bound to accept the meaning given the Scriptural text by the Roman Catholic Church. But it was Luther's contention that the Bible was a clear book and so he defended the perspicuity of Holy Writ.<sup>39</sup> The German Reformer rejected the claim of his church that the Scriptures were so obscure that only the doctors of the Church could give the intended meaning of the Word of God. For Luther the belief in the perspicuity of Holy Writ was coupled with the general priesthood of all believers, so that the Bible became the property of all Christians, not merely of a select group.

27 Still another important principle of interpretation for Luther was the one which stated: "Scripture interprets Scripture." This principle was fundamental for Luther's understanding, interpretation and exposition of the Bible. This principle was one that Luther found in the Bible itself. The New Testament contains numerous examples of

interpretation of Old Testament texts, especially in showing how in many places Christ was foreshadowed by means of types and also by rectilinear prophecies. The Christocentricity of the Bible is a definitely Lutheran earmark of the Reformer's hermeneutics and consequently of his theology.<sup>40</sup>

28 The hermeneutical principle that Scripture interprets Scripture is also based on the unity of the Biblical canon. Luther believed that the inspired books of the Old Testament, found in both the Old Testament and in the New, constituted one canon. Essential for Luther's Christology is this presupposition: the Bible constitutes one organic unity.<sup>41</sup> The canonical books of the Bible had only one author, namely, the Holy Spirit.

29 It should be noted here that there are modern Lutheran scholars who do not subscribe to this Lutheran principle and insist that the Old Testament need not be interpreted by the New Testament. For a number of Lutheran scholars the Old Testament is a problem.<sup>42</sup> Rudolf Bultmann's essay "The Significance of the Old Testament for the Christian Faith" shows that Bultmann found little of value for Christianity in the Old Testament.<sup>43</sup> Bultmann has found scholars who are sympathetic with his views among Lutherans and Protestants.<sup>44</sup>

30 A corollary of the hermeneutical principle that Scripture interprets Scripture is that of the analogy of faith. Luther on the basis of the organic and theological unity of the Bible taught that all material dealing with the same teachings or topics be gathered together and in this way the pattern of God's teaching on a given topic or doctrine be ascertained. Before and at Luther's time interpretation consisted in explaining Holy Writ by means of glosses and catenae of citations from the Fathers. For Luther the analogy of faith consisted

in the sum total of all the clear passages of Holy Writ. The difficult or dark passages were to be explained by the clear passages.<sup>45</sup> The New Testament especially makes it clear, so Luther argued, how many passages of the Old Testament are to be understood and interpreted. This stance is crucial for Luther's Christological statements as found by him in the Old Testament.

31 For Luther the literal interpretation of the Bible was only a means to an end. The purpose of all the Holy Writ was to find Christ in both major parts. Farrar cites Luther as having expressed this principle in these words: "Auch ist das der beste Pruefstein aller Buecher zu tadeln, wenn man sieht ob sie Christum treiben oder nicht."<sup>46</sup> H. P. Smith cited Luther as asserting: "If you will interpret well and securely, take Christ with you, for he is the man whom everything concerns."<sup>47</sup>

32 In his discussion of Luther's hermeneutics Ramm claimed that the Christological principle was "Luther's method of making the entire Bible a Christological book." Ramm claimed that "the Fathers did it with their allegorical method. Luther does it with the Christological method."<sup>48</sup> However, it should be stated in defense of Luther that the Fathers did it with a dubious method while the Reformer did it on Biblical grounds. The latter employed a Biblical principle of interpretation inspired by the Holy Spirit himself.

33 Ewald Plass, in a preface to the section dealing with "Christ" in his excellent three-volume work, entitled What Luther Says, wrote:

IN A VERY REAL SENSE Luther's theology is Christology. The Reformer made Christ the Redeemer the center of his writings just as he found Him to be the center of Scripture.

Without understanding who and what Christ is, neither Luther nor Scripture can be properly appreciated. That Scriptures and Christianity are foreign ground to all who do not recognize Christ the Redeemer the Doctor stated in his sermonic exposition of John 16:3.<sup>49</sup>

34 In a discourse on John 3:24, Luther claimed that Christ portrayed himself as the center of Scriptures:

Christ thereby gives us real ability to explain Moses and all the prophets. He tells us clearly that Moses with all his stories and figures (Bildern) points to Him, refers to Him, and means Him, in the sense that He is the Center from which the entire circle has been drawn and towards which it looks and that whoever directs himself to this Center belongs in the circle. For Christ is the central spot of the circle, and when viewed aright, all stories in Holy Scripture refer to Christ.<sup>50</sup>

35 The Christological principle of interpretation was employed by Luther already in his first Psalm Lectures (1513-1516). The Reformer averred: "I see nothing in Scripture except Christ crucified."<sup>51</sup> In his exposition of 2 Samuel 23:1-7 (1543) Luther advised his readers to accept Christ or stop reading the Bible. "Whoever has not accepted perfectly and purely this Man, called Jesus Christ, God's Son, whom we Christians are preaching, should let the Bible rest in peace. This is my advice, He will certainly take offense and become blinder and madder the longer he studies."<sup>52</sup>

## 2. The Christological Principle Determined Luther's Views about the Nature of the Old Testament

36 Luther thought highly of the Old Testament, as may be seen when Luther's commentaries or exposition on various Old Testament books are read and analyzed or when one examines his published sermons on the Old Testament texts. Thus the Reformer wrote about the importance and value of the Old Testament:

Some people think little of the Old Testament, considering it a book given only to the Jewish people and now out of date and containing only stories of time past. They think they have enough in the New Testament.. (But the apostles) teach us not to despise the Scriptures of the Old Testament but to read them with all diligence; for they themselves emphatically base the New Testament on them, and appeal to them. Thus St. Luke writes (Acts 17:11) that the people at Thessalonica searched Scripture daily to see whether it agreed with what Paul taught. Surely, the foundation and the proof of the New Testament are not to be despised; therefore, the Old Testament is to be highly esteemed.<sup>53</sup>

37 Luther did acknowledge that there was a difference between the Old Testament and the New. To quote from the Reformer's writings again:

In the first place, there is this distinction between the Old and New Testaments, as we have said above, that the Old pre-figured Christ but the New actually gives us what was promised in the Old and was symbolized by types. However, these types have

now been annulled, because the end they were to serve has been answered and attained. What was prefigured by them has been fulfilled. So, then, there should now no longer be any distinction of food, clothing, place, and time. All are alike in Christ, toward whom all pointed. The Jews were not saved by these types, for these types were not given to the end that they should make them holy; they were given to prefigure the coming of Christ.<sup>54</sup>

### The Misuse of Luther's Christological Principle Against Verbal Inspiration

38 While modern Lutheran scholars are not willing to use Luther's Christological principle in the interpretation of the Old Testament, they are willing to employ it as an argument against that Luther held verbal and plenary inspiration. It is claimed that Luther's dictum: "Was Christum treibt" was utilized by the Reformer to determine what in Holy Writ was binding upon men's consciences. However, an examination of the passage in which Luther used this phrase will reveal that this is an erroneous interpretation of what Luther was arguing for. Luther's discussion concerns the doctrine of justification by grace which was not accepted by the Romanists. The latter appealed to such passages as: "Thou shalt keep the commandments" (Deut. 8-6). "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" (Matt. 22:37), "This do and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:28). When these passages were used by Roman Catholic theologians to support the necessity of good works, Luther claimed that against their misuse of Scripture "he would urge Christ against the Scripture." In speaking about urging Christ against (such misuse of) Scripture Luther wrote: "Scripture is to be understood as testifying for Christ, not against Him,

it must therefore be considered as referring to Him, or not to be considered as true Scripture."<sup>55</sup> In affirming that Scripture is God's Word insofar as it impels toward Christ, Luther was laying down a principle of interpretation, and not one of selection as to what should be accepted and what not. For Luther there was no part of the Bible which did not impel towards Christ, for he declared: "The whole Scripture exists for the Son."<sup>55a</sup>

### The Law-Gospel Principle Linked Directly to the Christological Principle

39 For the Reformer the central doctrine of Scriptures was the doctrine of justification by faith, without the works of the law. The root heresy of the Galatians in Paul's day was that they taught justification by faith plus works. This New Testament heresy Luther claimed had been translated into a different key by the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Church taught that it was necessary: 1) to do religious works, and 2) to believe in Christ in order to be saved. Ramm has correctly asserted about Luther's understanding of Rome's position: "Justification by faith alone not only repudiated the Judaizers of the Gospel, but the Roman system of salvation."<sup>56</sup>

40 According to Luther, justification by faith was also an Old Testament doctrine. In his Lectures on Genesis 4:1 he declared: "All the saints of the Old Testament were justified by faith in the Seed which was to come."<sup>57</sup>

41 Intimately connected with Luther's doctrine of justification by faith was his practice of finding both Law and Gospel in all of Scripture. The Wittenberg Reformer contended that the reader of the Bible needed carefully to distinguish between

Law and Gospel in both Testaments. This became for him a cardinal principle of interpretation.<sup>58</sup> These two divine teachings must scrupulously be kept apart. Both the Roman Catholics and the Reformed were guilty of commingling them. Ernst Wright claimed that the Reformed do not follow this principle when they interpret the Bible, a principle which the nominal Lutheran Rudolf Bultmann advocated.<sup>59</sup>

42 In his introduction to the Old Testament (1523) Luther compared the Old Testament from the viewpoint of Law and Gospel as follows:

Know then, that the Old Testament is a book of laws, which teaches what we are to do and, in addition, gives examples and stories of how these laws are kept or broken, just as the New Testament is a Gospel or a book of grace and teaches whence one is to get the strength to fulfill the Law. But in the New Testament, along with the teaching about grace, many other teachings, laws, and directions for the ruling of the flesh are given, since in this life the spirit is not perfected and grace cannot rule alone. Just so, besides the laws, there are in the Old Testament some promises and offers of grace, by which the holy fathers and prophets under the Law were kept believing in Christ. Nonetheless, as the specific and chief doctrine of the New Testament is the proclamation of grace and peace in Christ, through the forgiveness of sins, so the specific and chief doctrine of the Old Testament is the teaching of laws, the showing of sin, and the promotion of good. Know, then, that this is what you have to expect in the Old Testament.<sup>60</sup>

43 Luther did recognize that the Old Testament lacked many of the details found in the New



Testament. It was his conviction that the Old Testament contained the articles of faith only in a general way and in this manner pointed to Christ.<sup>61</sup> Aside from this the Old Testament was not different from the New Testament. The great plan of salvation was less clear during the age of the promise than in the time of the New Testament fulfillment. In the introduction of a Christmas sermon on John 1:10-14 Luther remarked: "(in the Old Testament times) the precious metal still lies half-buried in the pit."<sup>62</sup>

44 Luther did not place the two Testaments on equal footing as to the clarity with which they taught the doctrine of Christ. They are not in all respects the same. On one occasion the Reformer called attention to this difference on this wise:

When it is said that the Old Testament is abolished and laid by, it should be understood between the Old and New Testament, as we have said above, that the Old prefigured Christ but the New actually gives us what was promised in the Old and was symbolized by types. However, these types have now been annulled, because the end they were to serve has been answered and attained. What was prefigured by them has been fulfilled. So, then, there should be now no longer any distinction of food, clothing, place, and time. All are alike in Christ, toward whom all pointed. The Jews were not saved by these types, for these types were not given to the end that they should make them holy; they were given to prefigure the coming of Christ.<sup>63</sup>

45 Relative to the Old Testament sacrifices Luther taught that they were not given the Old Testament believers in order that they themselves should justify--so he commented on Isaiah 1:11 (1534)--

but rather that they might be signs by which the pious testified that they believed the promises concerning Christ and expected Christ as Liberator.<sup>64</sup>

46 In his Christmas sermon on John 1:1-14 Luther defined the relationship of the Old and New Testaments to each other as follows:

The New Testament is nothing but a revelation of the Old Testament, as if one were in possession of a sealed letter and then later opened it. Just so the Old Testament is a letter containing Christ's testament. After His death he opened this letter and had it read and proclaimed everywhere through the Gospel.<sup>65</sup>

47 In the closing remarks on Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:55) the Reformer expressed the opinion that "all the fathers of the Old Testament, together with all the holy prophets, have had the same faith and Gospel that we have, as St. Paul says (I Cor. 10.1ff.)."<sup>66</sup>

48 Luther taught that all Old Testament prophets pointed to Christ. He stated this in his introduction to his exposition of the prophet Habakkuk (1526) like this:

It is certain that all prophets directed their predictions chiefly to Christ. Thus Saint Peter shows (Acts 3:24) that all prophets have spoken of the time of the New Testament; for the entire Old Testament is an introduction to it.<sup>67</sup>

49 In his last attack upon the papacy (1545) Luther centers his remarks upon Matthew 16:16-19, the primary text used by the Roman Catholic Church to this day as the Scripture upon which the papal claim

is based, and made the following comment on Peter's great confession at Caesarea Philippi:

What purpose other than the proclamation does Scripture have from beginning to end? Messiah, God's Son, was to come and through His sacrifice, as an innocent Lamb of God, bear and remove all the sins of the world and thus redeem men from eternal death for eternal salvation. For the sake of Messiah and God's Son the Holy Scripture was written, and for their sake all has happened that has happened.<sup>68</sup>

50 In speaking about the Godhead, in which Jesus was the Second Person, Luther's conviction was "that Holy Scripture has more to say about the Son than about the Father because the entire Scriptures exist for the sake of the Son. In the Old Testament, too, there are more testimonies to the Son than to the Father."<sup>69</sup>

51 When Luther preached a sermon on August 5, 1545, on John 5:39, 40, 43, taken down by Matthias Wanckel and republished after Luther's death, the Reformer encouraged his listeners to look for Christ in the Bible or read the Scriptures in vain. Thus Luther said:

Here Christ would indicate the principal reason why the Scripture was given by God. Men are to study and search in it and to learn that He, He, Mary's Son, is the One who is able to give eternal life to all who come to Him and believe on Him. Therefore he who would correctly and profitably read Scripture should see to it that he finds Christ in it; then he finds life eternal without fail. On the other hand, if I do not so study and understand Moses and the

prophets to find that Christ came from heaven for the sake of my salvation, became man, suffered, died, and buried, rose, and ascended to heaven so that through Him I enjoy reconciliation with God, forgiveness of all my sins, grace, righteousness, and life eternal, then my reading in Scripture is of no help whatsoever to my salvation. I may, of course, become a learned man by reading and studying Scripture . . . yet all this would do me no good whatever. For if I do not know and do not find Christ neither do I find salvation and life eternal.<sup>70</sup>

52 Some Lutheran scholars have raised the question whether the Reformer employed soteriological presuppositions as a principle of interpretation. This may be stated in yet another way: Did Luther employ the Law/Gospel distinction and the doctrine of justification by faith as a principle for arriving at the meaning of the Scriptural text?<sup>71</sup> Those students of Luther's writings who would answer the question in the affirmative would support their stance by the following passage from the Formula of Concord:

The distinction between law and gospel is an especially brilliant light which serves the purpose that the Word of God may be rightly divided and the writings of the holy prophets and apostles may be explained and understood correctly (German: eigentlich erklart und verstanden).<sup>72</sup>

53 In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession they would cite the following:

The article of justification is of special service for the clear, correct understanding

of the entire Holy Scriptures, and alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure and right knowledge of Christ, and alone opens the door of the entire Bible.<sup>73</sup>

54 This certainly appears to have been Luther's position, as may be seen from the Smalcald Articles. In them Luther argues that the Mass as a means of meeting God's favor,<sup>77</sup> and the monastic vows to achieve God's favor<sup>78</sup> must be opposed as contradictory to the chief article of the Christian religion.

55 If Christ is not the center of the Old Testament, as some modern Lutheran scholars have argued, then logically the true understanding of the Gospel is denied. Luther in his comments on Galatians 4: 8-9 (1531) claimed that without the article on justification God is not known. Thus Luther wrote:

Whoever departs from the article of justification does not know God is an idolator... For when this article has been taken away, nothing remains but error, hypocrisy, godlessness and idolatry, although it may seem to be the height of truth, worship of God, holiness, etc.

The reason for this is that God neither wants to be known in any other way except through Christ, according to this word in John 1:18: "The Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."<sup>79</sup>

56 In 1534 Luther proposed a series of theses for discussion which were founded on Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Thesis number 1 reads:

From the beginning of the world men have worshipped one and the same God in various

ways through faith in the same Christ.

Number 20 reads:

For solely by faith in Christ--previously promised, now presented--the entire Church, from the beginning to the end of the world, is justified.<sup>80</sup>

57 Karl Holl criticized Luther's interpretation of the Old Testament as being eisegesis, when he wrote:

Luther naturally rests upon the conviction that Scripture has one and the same meaning in all of its parts. This compels him to explain into the Psalms what has become the most important to him in the Bible, the Pauline Gospel. He does not notice that he does the greatest violence to the text by doing so, since the Psalms, like the entire Old Testament, preach self-righteousness.<sup>81</sup>

58 Holl reflects the typical view of modern Lutheran scholars and shows that a gulf exists between them and Luther concerning the understanding of the Old Testament. Modern Lutheran critical scholars are not at all in Luther's camp on the matter of what constitutes the plan of salvation in the Old Testament.<sup>82</sup>

### III. Sources for Luther's Views on the Christology of the Old Testament between 1513 and 1545

59 Luther wrote constantly and voluminously; the present critical Weimar edition of his works has reached the century mark. During these years Luther wrote at least 191 different writings, some short

and some very lengthy such as his last work, The Genesis Commentary (8 volumes in the American Edition).

60 Ewald Plass has listed no less than 196 distinct Luther writings between 1513 and 1545.<sup>83</sup> Twenty volumes of the American Edition reproduce in translation Old Testament commentaries and expositions, in some of which there are discussions of Messianic prophecies and other data that can be utilized for the person wishing to set forth Luther's Christological views as expressed by him in the Old Testament. Luther expressed the same Christological views that he found in the New Testament. The following commentaries or expositions will be especially helpful: Genesis, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, the Minor Prophets, Luther's Prefaces to the books of the Old Testament, written for the German Bible, New Testament commentaries that have quotations and allusions to the Old Testament. His sermons, based upon both Old and New Testament pericopes, contain helpful statements for those who wish to ascertain Luther's Old Testament Christological views. A writing of the Reformer which is particularly useful relative to the topic of the 1982 Reformation Lectures is his The Jews and Their Lies, a volume of 394 paragraphs, written in 1542.<sup>84</sup> In this polemical writing Luther discussed a number of key Old Testament Messianic passages and pericopes, such as Genesis 49:10; 2 Samuel 23:2-3; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; verses from Haggai (2:7), Daniel 9 and The Seventy Weeks or heptads. The third portion of this rather lengthy treatise treats of "The Lies of the Jews Concerning the Person of Our Beloved Lord Jesus Christ." This fourth section treats of the difference between the Jew's and the Christian's understanding of the Messiah. Henrich Bornkamm, in an appendix of his classic book, Luther and the Old Testament, has given a list of the major Old Testament writings of the Wittenberg Reformer.<sup>85</sup>

#### IV. Types of Christological Data Found by Luther in the Old Testament

61 Luther found at least three different kinds of Christological teachings in the Old Testament, namely: that of the Angel of the Lord; types that pointed to Christ's person, work, and kingdom; and rectilinear prophecies dealing with Christ's person and work.

##### The Angel of the LORD

62 In a sermon preached on the festival of the Holy Trinity in 1535, with the Gospel for that Sunday as the text (John 3:1-15), the Reformer stated his conviction that "the Angel of the LORD" in the Old Testament was the appearance of the preincarnate Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.<sup>86</sup> Here is the quotation from that sermon:

The patriarch Jacob distinguished the Person of the Holy Trinity (Gen. 48:15) . . . He calls the Lord Christ an "Angel," not as if He were an angel according to His essence and nature, for it would be manifest idolatry to pray to an angel and ask for his blessing. By His prayer Jacob, then, confesses this Angel to be true essential God. But He is not forever to conduct Himself as the invisible God; for He is to be sent to earth, to be clothed in our flesh, and to be sacrificed for our sin. As Christ often says in the New Testament: "The Father hath sent Me (John 20:21)." Again, in the prophet Isaiah: "The Lord hath sent Me to bind up the broken hearted" (61:1); also in Isaiah 63:9: "The Angel of His Presence saved them." Thus Malachi calls Christ "the Messenger of the Covenant" (3:1). So these two names, "God" and "Angel" describe two distinct Persons,



whose essence is nonetheless entirely one and the same.<sup>87</sup>

63 On the strength of this statement Plass claimed: "We are, in consequence, prepared to hear Luther identify Christ with the God of the Old Testament. All the revelations God gave there necessarily came through Christ, the Reformer holds. This includes the giving of the Ten Commandments."<sup>88</sup> The expression "the angel of the Lord" or "the angel of God" occurs more than 40 times in the Old Testament. Both the Concordia Cyclopedia<sup>89</sup> and the Lutheran Cyclopedia of 1954<sup>90</sup> take the position that those passages which speak of "the Angel of the LORD" refer to Christ. The same was also the stance of Eugene Kauffeld in his essay dealing with "Jesus Christ, the Promised Messiah--Fact not Fiction."<sup>91</sup> However, Wenger, in his article in the 1975 edition of The Lutheran Cyclopedia, gives the different view taken both by conservative and critical scholars and states: "Luther refrains from offering a specific identification."<sup>91a</sup> As is obvious from the passage already cited, Wenger's statement is not accurate. However, it must be noted that Luther, as far as a number of passages found in Genesis are concerned, such as 16:7-15; 21:17; Genesis 18; 22:11; 31:11-13, did not identify the "Angel of the LORD" with Christ.

64 Genesis 16:7-14 and Genesis 21:17 refer to the angel of the Lord who appeared to Hagar. Kretzmann says that this was the Son of God.<sup>92</sup> But Luther, in commenting on Genesis 16:7-9 wrote:

Moses does not identify the angel who spoke with Hagar. Hiliary thinks that it was God Himself and in general connects such appearance of the angels with the mystery of the Trinity.

Even though human beings are called angels, I nevertheless think that this angel had assumed the appearance of a human being; for when angels appear before people they assume the form of the body in which they appear.<sup>93</sup>

65 Luther's discussion of Genesis 21:17 gives no evidence that the Reformer viewed the angel of God mentioned here as anything else than one of God's created angels.<sup>94</sup>

66 In Genesis 18 it is recorded that three men who were angels came to Abraham. One of them (according, e.g., to Kretzmann) was the "angel of the Lord," Christ Himself. Luther holds to the position that all three men were angels, who assumed the form of men.<sup>95</sup> Luther's comment on the third man was:

The third angel remained. Him, like the other two, Abraham regarded as a human being, but as such a one in whom was the Spirit of God. For he saw that this angel had the Word of God, and he concluded that this angel was speaking the Word of God, not that of a human being. For this reason Abraham also worshiped him as God. Therefore, the statement of the text--"He still stood before the Lord"--is the same as if it stated: "Abraham listened to and looked upon this third angel as upon God, because he knew that this angel had the Word of God."<sup>96</sup>

67 In Genesis 22:11 the angel of the Lord stops Abraham from sacrificing his son Isaac. Luther's opinion concerning this angel is that he was real, bringing the real Word of God.<sup>97</sup> Again, Luther gives no indication that he considered this appearance as anything unusual. It was a created angel bringing the Word to Abraham.

68 In Genesis 31:11-13 the angel of the Lord appeared to Jacob in a dream and told him to return to his own land with his family. In Luther's discussion of this passage he indicated that he believed that this was a created angel and sent to Jacob with His Word.

69 Again in Genesis 32:24 the Biblical reader is told that Jacob wrestled with a man till day-break. The Genesis account does not mention an angel; however, the prophet Hosea said that an angel wrestled with Jacob (12, 4). Luther believed it was not an angel, but a man. Here is the Reformer's interpretation:

But our opinion is this, that the wrestler is the Lord of glory, God Himself, or God's Son, who was to become incarnate and who appeared and spoke to the fathers.<sup>98</sup>

70 However, in regard to the angel who redeemed Jacob from all evil, mentioned in Genesis 48:16, the position of Luther was as follows:

Therefore one must note carefully that Jacob is speaking about Christ, the Son, who alone is the Angel or Ambassador, born of a man in time from the Virgin Mary--not the Father, not the Holy Spirit.<sup>99</sup>

71 Philippi, Pieper and other Lutheran exegetes would in general identify Christ with the "angel of the LORD," and thus would exegetically disagree with Luther's limitation to only certain passages.

#### Typological Messianic or Christological Teachings as Revealed by New Testament Writers

72 A second kind of Christological teaching found in the Old Testament by Luther would be numerous

types, which on the authority of the New Testament were considered as predicting by means of events, institutions and personalities truths about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. On the strength of the New Testament Luther accepted those types and their fulfillment, the anti-types, which Paul and the author of Hebrews so indicated. In interpreting the Old Testament, the individual who accepts the hermeneutical principle that Scripture interprets Scripture will accept the New Testament's interpretation of the Old Testament types. This was, of course, Luther's position. With the Epistle to the Hebrews and Paul, Luther found types of Christ in Adam, Melchizedek, Aaron, Joshua, David, Solomon, Zerubbabel, while the passover lamb and the sprinkling of its blood on the doorposts were types of Christ's atoning death. On the strength of John 3:14-16 Luther held that the lifting up of the brazen serpent was a type of Christ's crucifixion on the cross (Numbers 21:1-8), that the swallowing of Jonah by a great fish and his stay in the flesh and being spewed out again were types of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

#### Rectilinear Prophecies of Luther's Writings

73 On the authority of the New Testament, the Reformer believed that many prophecies are found in the Old Testament which predicted many facts about Christ's life and ministry. In Lectures II and III most of Luther's Christological data will be composed of rectilinear Messianic prophecies.

## LECTURE II

### The Biblical Theology Approach to the Presentation of Luther's Old Testament Christology - Luther's Christological Interpretation during the Revelational Periods from Genesis to Solomon's Reign

- 74 In Lecture I it was shown that the Christological principle of interpretation was applied by Luther to both the Old and New Testaments. Some Lutheran scholars when they discuss Luther's Christology fail to deal at all with his Old Testament views about the person and work of Christ, but limit themselves altogether to the New Testament, which, it is true, furnishes Luther with a great deal of data for his Christological pronouncements.
- 75 In setting forth Luther's views on the Christology of the Old Testament, two possible methods might be followed. The student of Luther's writing may adopt the method of systematic or dogmatic theology, which would involve an organization of the Christological data according to the following system: the person and work of Christ; the states of humiliation and exaltation; and the three offices of Christ, namely, that of prophet, priest, and king.<sup>1</sup> The presentation would draw from the various canonical books of the Old Testament the data requisite for the systematic presentation, ignoring the historical time order in which these truths were revealed. In passing it should be noted that the books on dogmatics, in their elaborate exhibition of the doctrine of Christology, in 99 percent of the data cited use mostly New Testament references and only occasionally allude to or cite an Old

Testament text. From most Lutheran and Protestant dogmatics little can be learned about the Old Testament's teaching on the locus of Christology.<sup>2</sup>

76 The other approach that can be employed in setting forth Luther's Old Testament views on Christology would be to follow the method used in Biblical Theology. The distinguishing difference between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology is that the former uses the historical principle as its organizing principle while the latter utilizes the systematic principle and is not bound by the order in which Biblical truths have been revealed.<sup>3</sup> Payne has defined Biblical Theology as "the Biblical history of divine revelation."<sup>4</sup> Biblical theology emphasizes the historical order in which divine truths have been revealed. It deals with objective historical facts and revealed truths and follows these through a succession of different and distinct periods of revelation. The important question asked by the student of Old Testament Biblical theology is: When did any historical event occur and at what time was a doctrine enunciated?

77 Various ways for the presentation of Old Testament theology according to time periods have been advanced. Vos has proposed a division of the Old Testament into three revelatory periods: The pre-Mosaic, Mosaic, and prophetic.<sup>5</sup> Oehler has employed a similar threefold division.<sup>6</sup> However, a more detailed and precise chronological time order would be the schema of Payne, who distinguished ten different periods of Biblical revelation,<sup>7</sup> during which God gave his people revelations and during which also the inscripturation of the Old Testament canon took place.

78 In the next two lectures these ten periods of revelation will be utilized in the presentation of Luther's Christology as the Reformer believed it was made known during at least 4,000 years of Old

Testament history. In these presentations the organizing principle used by writers on Biblical theology will be adopted. The lecturer believes that he has good warrant for the adoption of the latter procedure. Hengstenberg, the great Lutheran orthodox theologian of the nineteenth century used the Biblical theology method in his major work entitled The Christology of the Old Testament (4 volumes) in 1828-35 and revised in 1854-57.<sup>8</sup> Liberal theologians have indeed criticized Hengstenberg's work as a reading of New Testament Christology back into the Old Testament, but the essayist is convinced that in most points his exegesis is careful and represents the facts as they were revealed concerning Christ in the time before the close of the Old Testament canon.<sup>9</sup>

#### A. Primitive Period of Revelation (From Creation to Abraham)

79 The first eleven chapters of Genesis contain the primary Biblical source materials for the primitive period. This period includes the ages before and after the Great Deluge. Luther found Christ already in Genesis 1. In his sermons the Reformer did not tire of referring to the theanthropic person of Christ. For Luther the essential deity of Christ in the Old Testament was already established by the fact that Christ was the Second Person of the Godhead from all eternity. It was his belief that the doctrine of the Trinity was known throughout the period of the Old Testament. In his comments on Genesis 3:22, Luther wrote: "At the very beginning of the world, the fact that there were Three Persons in the Godhead was indicated. Later this was recognized by the prophets and finally revealed through the Gospel."<sup>10</sup> Luther did admit that "in the Old Testament the article of the Trinity was not as clear and plain as in the New Testament . . . The patriarchs and the prophets understood this article."<sup>11</sup>

80 In Genesis 1 God is depicted as speaking. The Hebrew form "wajomer" ("He said") occurs seven times. Since the New Testament in John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:12-14 and Hebrews 1:2 spoke of Christ as Creator, Luther, on the strength of the LOGOS teaching of John's Gospel, believed that the "speaking" referred to the Second Person of the Godhead.

81 Messianic prophecy has its origin in Genesis 3:i5, which has been called the "protevangelium," the first Gospel promise.<sup>12</sup> It was spoken by the LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) to the Serpent, used by Satan, in the hearing of Adam and Eve. The first Messianic promise was spoken directly by God: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, and he shall bruise thee in regard to the head and thou shalt bruise him with regard to the heel." According to Luther this amounted to saying:

You Satan, have attacked and deceived man through the woman that through sin you might pose as their head and lord. I, in turn, shall lie in wait for you with the very same weapon. I will take the woman and raise up a Descendant (semen) from her, and the Descendant will crush your head. Through sin you have corrupted and made guilty the nature of mankind; but out of this very flesh I will produce such a Man as shall crush and lay low both you and all your power.<sup>13</sup>

82 According to the Reformer, Gospel religion was revealed immediately after the Fall in the promise that the Seed of the woman would crush the head of the Serpent.<sup>14</sup> Luther rejected that Latin Vulgate's translation of "ipsa conteret caput suum," (and she shall tread down your head), a rendering that contradicts the clear words of the Hebrew



text and the many passages in the Bible that present Christ as the sole and only Savior from guilt and the penalty of sin.

83 It was Luther's contention that Adam and Eve understood the promise of a Savior given to mankind's first parents. Luther translated Genesis 4:1: "Ich habe den Mann, den Herrn," ("I have begotten a man, even the Lord"). In support of this translation Luther wrote: "Although Eve was mistaken in this hope (that Cain was the promised Seed of the woman), her words nevertheless reveal that Eve was a holy woman and believed the promise of the future by the blessed Savior."<sup>15</sup> Again Luther wrote: "When Eve had given birth to her first son, Cain, she of course supposed this child to be the man whom the Lord had promised to her who would avenge her on that serpent. On that account she exclaims 'I have gotten a man, the Lord, the God Jehovah, the Woman's Seed.'<sup>16</sup>

84 Francis Pieper agreed with Luther and expressed the following opinion in his Christian Dogmatics:

Accordingly, we shall have to agree with Luther when he calls the first promise after the Fall both "very lucid and clear," as also "very dark." Very dark it is as to the accompanying circumstances, since as yet it says nothing of Abraham's seed, David's Branch, in whom God Himself is the acting subject and who will make an end of the devil in his work of destroying mankind, that is, will abolish the guilt and death of man. In Genesis 3:15 we have the substance of 2 Cor. 5:19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."<sup>17</sup>

85 Relative to the true meaning of Genesis 3:15, Luther also asserted:

Look at Adam and Eve; they are full of sin and death; nevertheless, because they hear the promise of the Seed of the woman who shall crush the head of the Serpent, they hope for the same thing that is our hope, namely, that death be abolished, sin eradicated, and righteousness, life and peace be brought back. In this hope our first parents live and die, and because of this hope they verily are holy and righteous.<sup>18</sup>

86 For this reason Luther would not grant that there was any difference between the faith of Adam and Eve and the faith of New Testament Christians.<sup>19</sup>

87 When the Authorized Version, the Revised Standard and other versions translate Genesis 4:1: "I have befootten a man with the help of the Lord," they are not following the Hebrew text, but have adopted the rendering of the Septuagint and the Vulgate which have interpreted the text to mean "with the help of" or "by" God. However, the simplest rendering of the syntax of Genesis 4:1 is: "And Adam knew his wife and she conceived and bare Cain, and said: 'I have gotten a man, (even) the LORD.'" The same identical construction is found in the sentence which immediately follows, which is translated: "Again she bore his brother (even) Abel." If the last verse is so rendered and understood, why not the previous verse?<sup>20</sup>

88 Regarding Genesis 3:15 Luther believed that it contained the promise by means of which all the saints of the Old Testament were justified and sanctified by the faith in the "Seed," which was to come.<sup>21</sup> With this verse began the stream of Messianic promises which in the course of the centuries was going to become a mighty stream in terms of information, doctrine to be divulged about the

Person and Work of Christ. By the time this small rivulet, beginning at Genesis 3:15, has swelled into a mighty river and has reached the open sea of the New Testament, a rather concise picture of the Messiah, God's Son, had been revealed.

89 On the strength of Hebrews 11:1-7 Luther would also assert that all believers who lived before the Deluge were saved by faith in the promised Seed of the woman. After the writer of Hebrews had shown the importance of believing in Christ as well as His superiority over the angels, Moses, Joshua, and the Aaronic priesthood, he then listed Old Testament worthies who possessed the saving faith centered in Christ. Abel is mentioned first: "By faith Abel offered up a better sacrifice than Cain," and through it he was attested as being righteous. Luther contended that Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God, not because of the material of his sacrifice, but because of the fact that he had believed in the coming of the Messiah. It was on account of this faith, also, that God testified to him that he was righteous. (Genesis 4:3-5; Matthew 23:36).<sup>22</sup>

90 Noah is the third of the antediluvians mentioned in Hebrew 11 who were justified by faith. Of Noah it is stated that he found grace in the eyes of the LORD, that he was a preacher of righteousness, and that he became an heir of righteousness (Genesis 6:8-9; 2 Peter 2:5; Hebrew 11:7).<sup>23</sup>

#### The Prophecy of Noah (Genesis 9:25-27)

91 After the one hundred and twenty years of grace had elapsed and all, save eight people, refused to believe Noah's warning about a coming great flood, God destroyed mankind and all land animals except those in the ark. After a year and a month Noah, his family and the animals left the ark. After coming down from Mt. Ararat in the course of time Noah planted a vineyard. Noah drank too much wine

and became intoxicated and lay uncovered in the presence of Ham and Canaan. The latter must have mocked his grandfather and showed disrespect for Noah, who was a priest of God and also family head, and thus sinned against the fourth commandment.<sup>23a</sup> Shem and Japhet refused to look upon the nakedness of their father. When Noah became sober and had been informed of the conduct of Ham, Canaan, Shem and Japhet, he pronounced a curse upon Canaan and a blessing upon Shem and Japhet.

92 Noah's curse and blessing was considered by Luther as containing a Messianic prophecy. The Reformer claimed that the Noah Prophecy, first spoken by a man, was wonderful because of the appropriateness of each word. Noah does not bless Shem but the God (called Yahweh) of Shem. Noah gives thanks to God for having embraced Shem and for granting him the spiritual promise, or the blessing of the woman's seed. But when Noah comes to Japhet he does not use the term for God employed when addressing Shem. Thereby God indicated the mystery of which Paul speaks in Romans 11:11.<sup>24</sup>

B. The Patriarchal Age From Abraham  
to Moses' Birth  
(Gen. 11:27-50:26), 2166-1525 B.C.

93 Between Noah's blessing and the one God gave Abraham, at least 1600 years elapsed, possibly even more time. Writing about Abram/Abraham, Luther averred: "This is the third era (as they call it), in which the Holy Scripture begins the description of the Church with a new family. Abraham, a descendant of Shem, becomes the bearer of the promise."<sup>25</sup> That all the earth was to be blessed by one of Abraham's descendants was understood by Luther as a prophecy of the Christ. In his great Commentary on Genesis Luther wrote of Genesis 12:2: "This is a particularly excellent text, and one of the chief

passages of the entire Holy Scripture."26

94 The promise that One Descendant would be a blessing to the nations is found five times in the patriarchal narratives, namely, in 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 25:4 and 28:14. In 22:18, 26:4, and 28:14 the phrasing "on thee" and "in thy Seed" are stressed. The translation in the Revised Standard Version that in these "all nations of the earth shall bless themselves" is a faulty rendering of the Hebrew verb form (the Niphal), used in three of the passages just cited. It also contradicts the translations in the Septuagint, the Peshitta and the Vulgate. Above all, understanding the Nephal form as a reflexive and not as a passive contradicts the interpretation of Paul in Galatians 3:17, where Genesis 22:18 is explained as not speaking of many seeds, but of One, which is Christ. Thus Luther would hold that it was from Christ that blessings would be made possible for the nations of the world. The word "Seed" in Genesis 22:18 does not refer to a group; it is not a collective but is to be understood as an individual, just as "seed" in Genesis 3:15 is not a collective term but refers to One, Christ. For other examples in the Hebrew Bible where the word "seed" (Hebrew zarah) means just one person, consult Genesis 4:25; 21:13; 1 Samuel 1:11.27

95 Hence in the promise to Abraham the following truths are taught about the Messiah: 1) He is to be of the offspring of Abraham; 2) He is to be a blessing. Here one finds a narrowing down of the human ancestry of Christ, from the offspring of a woman; from a member of a race descendant from Shem, thus a Semite. In Genesis 12:3 Yahweh said: "I will bless." Thus the blessing comes from Yahweh but also equally, according to verse 3, from the Messiah. This means that the Messiah stands on the same plane with God. Thus in 12:1-3 the reader finds proof for the deity of Christ. This should be

compared with Psalm 72:17, which asserted about the Messiah: "And men shall be blessed in him: All nations shall call upon his name." Only of a truly divine Being can it be said that through Him the nations of the earth would be blessed. If Genesis 12:3 only referred to temporal blessings, there would be no progress in verse 3, because it would be tautological, simply repeating the same truth asserted in verse 2. The fact is, the Jews have not been a blessing to the world because they failed in their God-given mission as stated in Exodus 19:1-6.

96 Did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob so understand the promise given each one of them? Luther would answer in the affirmative.<sup>28</sup> He would cite the New Testament that they did. Hebrews tells its readers that their minds were not centered upon an earthly Canaan and a great line of descendants. Abraham's mind was fixed upon Christ, as is proved by John 8:56, where Jesus said that "Abraham rejoiced to see My day and saw it." Abraham was given a vision and knowledge of Christ and His salvation. He believed this and because of his faith he was declared righteous (Romans 4:3). Luther could have referred to the entire New Testament as being a fulfillment of Genesis 12:3. Christ did appear and "took on Him the seed of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:16). And according to the last chapter of Hebrews this Jesus who did this was true God (Ch. 13:8). In Jesus lies the salvation of mankind (Acts 3:25-26). The blessing is, in the first place, the righteousness of faith, or the forgiveness of sins, and, in the second place, the eternal inheritance in heaven (Gal. 3:18-20).

97 Thus while Genesis 3:15 proclaims redemption by the efforts of Christ, Genesis 15:6, having 12:3 as its presupposition, teaches the truth of justification by faith.

98 In the Patriarchal narratives there are a number of references to "the angel of the LORD," to Christophanies, that is, pre-Bethlehem appearances of Christ. Luther, however, did not believe that the Angel of the LORD, twice mentioned in the Hagar narratives and also in connection with the sacrifice of Mount Moriah, was Christ who later on assumed permanent humanity in the incarnation.<sup>29</sup>

The Blessing of Jacob to Judah  
(Genesis 49:8-12)

99 In anticipation of his death Jacob called his sons together to his bedside and pronounced a statement on each, telling of that son's future. Joseph had received a prior blessing in 48, where his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh received special blessing. The highpoint of Genesis 49 was the Messianic prediction uttered by Israel. Luther called Jacob "a hero of faith," from whom a future king was going to come, who would receive the obedience of peoples.<sup>30</sup> The Reformer translated verse 10 as follows: "Es wird das Zepter von Judah nicht entwendet werden, noch ein Meister von seinen Fuessen, bis dass der Held komme, und denselben werden die Voelker anhangen." Luther did not follow the Septuagint or the Vulgate in his rendering of the Hebrew she lo, translated in the King James Version as a proper name, Shiloh. The Hebrew law-giver was interpreted by Luther as "Meister," "master" or "ruler." The central teaching of Genesis 49:10 would be the kingship of the Messiah and the universal rule of the coming descendant of Judah. Luther considered Genesis 49:8-12 as a Messianic prediction,<sup>31</sup> for he was convinced that in these words Jacob had preached the kingdom of the Messiah. Thus in his comments on this prophecy he averred:

A precious rule is the kingdom of Christ.  
The man who believes that God is gracious

to him and His Father, that Christ, the Son of God, has abolished death, sin, hell and the devil--ought he not to rejoice and exult?<sup>32</sup>

100 Luther held that not only was the Messiah predicted here but that as Judah's Descendant he would rule over the kingdom of grace. Therefore, with the coming of Shiloh the Peace-bringer came in the Person of the Messiah. It was altogether fitting that on the night of Christ's incarnation "Peace on earth" should have been the content of the song of the angelic hosts over Bethlehem's plain.

101 The fourth Messianic prophecy of Genesis clearly foretold the kingly rule of Christ as well as the nature of His kingdom as set forth in symbolical language of 49:11-12. Each prophecy in Genesis advanced mankind's understanding of who the Messiah was to be and what He was going to accomplish.

C. The Mosaic Period, 1527-1406 B.C.  
Christ in Exodus

102 Luther claimed that Christ is the God of the Old Testament. Thus he asserted:

Yes, Jesus of Nazareth, who died on the cross, is the God who says in the First Commandment, "I am the Lord, thy God." If the Jews and the Mohammedans were to hear this, how they would rage! Yet it is true and must be remain true forever; and he who does not believe is to be destined to trouble and burn forever for his unbelief.<sup>33</sup>



103 Luther preached a number of sermons on Exodus between 1524 and 1527. In one on Exodus 3:1-6 Luther expressed a heart full of love for Christ, and, with the eyes of his faith fixed firmly on Him, the Reformer saw signs of Christ at many places and in many incidents in the Bible. Thus he also sees the burning bush typify Christ and His work.<sup>34</sup>

#### Christ in Leviticus

104 For Lutheranism's founder the Book of Leviticus was especially rich in ritual or ceremonial types. Luther believed that the Epistle to the Hebrews was an especial commentary on the significance of the Mosaic ceremonial system. Concerning the sacrifices he wrote:

Sacrifices were not instituted by God that they themselves might justify. Rather they were signs by which the pious testified that they believed the promises concerning Christ and expected Christ as Liberator.<sup>35</sup>

105 Regarding the Ark of the Covenant found in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle, Luther asserted:

In the Old Testament was an Ark of the Covenant, which was covered by a lid called the mercy seat, and above the mercy seat looking at each other were two cherubs. The Ark signifies the church, which the Son of God, the mercy seat, covers, as the two cherubs, that is, the Old and the New Testament, proclaimed. These looked at each other, that is the Old Testament is the spring of the New, the New the light on the Old.<sup>36</sup>

## Christ in Numbers

106 Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:4 said of the children of Israel that "they all did drink of the spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ." What Paul was telling the Corinthians is that while the mouths in the wilderness partook of the water flowing at their feet, their spirits were refreshed through faith in Christ, who was present with them as the Rock of salvation. Luther expressed it in this way:

That is, they believed in the same Christ, although He had not yet appeared in the flesh, but was to come later; and the sign of such for their faith was the physical rock, from which they drank water, just as we in the physical bread and wine upon the altar eat and drink the true Christ spiritually, that is, eating and drinking externally, we exercise our faith internally. For if those had not God's Word and faith while they were drinking water out of the rock, it would have had no value for their souls.<sup>37</sup>

### The Messianic Prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:15-18

107 In the second oration of his three farewell addresses Moses predicted: "The LORD your God will raise a Prophet for you, an Israelite like me: listen to him." Again: "I will raise a Prophet for them, One of their fellow Israelites, like you. I will have Him speak My Word, and He will tell them everything I order Him. If anyone will not listen to what He says for Me, I will punish Him." (18:18-19).<sup>38</sup>

108 Luther accepted the New Testament's understanding of these verses as having been predictive

of the prophetic office of Christ<sup>39</sup> and that those would be judged who refused to accept the claims and teachings of Christ.<sup>40</sup>

109 God's promise to send His people a prophet from the midst of the people, like unto Moses, has been the occasion of much controversy among Protestant and Lutheran commentators and Biblical scholars.<sup>41</sup> Some have taken the position that this promise refers to a line of prophets, one succeeding the other, from time to time, as God desired to warn his people or communicate with them a new truth. Luther, in following the principle that Scripture interprets Scripture, points to Christ alone. Which are these New Testament references? Luther cited John 1:45, where the disciples of John the Baptist appeal to the Deuteronomy 18:14 passage, or John 4:25ff., the case of the Samaritan woman, who accepted only the Pentateuch as Word of God, and referred to Deuteronomy as predicting the coming of the Messiah. She said to Jesus: "He will tell us all things," and Jesus replied to her: "I who speak to thee, am He." Jesus tells the Jews that they should hear Him, because Moses wrote of Him. Deuteronomy 18:15-18 is the only passage in the Pentateuch of a threatening character and this is also noted in John 5:45-47. Peter in Acts 3:22-26 and Stephen in Acts 7:37 understood Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 as speaking about Christ. Luther contended that the prophet predicted by Moses must altogether be a unique Prophet, in some aspects like unto Moses, with whom God spoke directly. Moses was also a type of Christ, besides uttering this great prophecy about Christ's prophetic office and also about that aspect of His Kingly Office according to which He will act as Judge of the living and dead.<sup>42</sup>

110 What Moses said about the Great Future Prophet fits Christ only, because He will be the

mediator between God and man. While Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18 do not give the contents of the message of this Prophet, Israel at Moses' time could already know that the content of the Messiah's message could not be the same as that of Moses. The Law was given in its perfection entirely by Moses. Moses in his first address (4:2), in his second major oration (12:33), and in the third (30:10ff.) clearly declared this fact. Luther claimed that there would be no need and a new prophet to declare God's will if there would not be another revelation to be expected.<sup>43</sup> Of this coming Prophet, it is said briefly, but absolutely: "Unto him ye shall hearken." In Deuteronomy 18:19 God stated: "Whoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Thus Yahweh Himself declared that this Prophet must be heard. This means that He would bring a more important and higher revelation than that given to Moses. This future Prophet will be God's final revelation to the world (Hebrews 1:1).

#### D. The Period of Consolidation, 1406-1010 B.C.

111 This revelatory period includes the times of Joshua, the Judges and the beginning of the undivided monarchy. In this period there are recorded a number of appearances of the "uncreated Angel," who in Joshua 5:15 appeared as the "Captain of the Hosts of the Lord." P. Kretzmann, following Luther's understanding, remarked: "That was the Prince of the host of angels, the great Angel of the Covenant, of an essence with the Lord Himself who accompanied Israel from Egypt and from Sinai."<sup>44</sup> In the Book of Judges the Angel of the LORD appeared three times: He came to Bochim (2:1-4); he told Israel to curse Meroz (5:23) and he showed Himself to Gideon (6:11) and to Monoah and his wife (13:2ff.).

112 Under Samuel a better time, spiritually speaking, began, for Samuel was not only a prophetic judge but also a reformer. God's Word began to be generally known again by means of revelation. Under Samuel young men were trained for the profession of religious preachers among the twelve tribes. By repentance of the people the way was prepared for a great period of prosperity and spiritual enlightenment. The reigns of David and Solomon were the golden age of Israelite history. The promise of God's temporal blessings was once more fulfilled in richest measure.

#### E. The Davidic Period, 1010-970 B.C.

113 David was a gifted person: a warrior, administrator and poet. God selected him also to be a prophet and vouchsafed unto him great truths about the coming Messiah. David was chosen by Yahweh to be the ancestor of the Messiah. David was a very religious man who planned to provide the ark of the covenant with a permanent structure and to replace the movable tabernacle with a temple. After David had collected considerable materials for this planned temple, Yahweh informed David through Nathan the prophet that Solomon was to build the temple.

114 However, God did establish a covenant with Israel's second king, called the "Davidic Covenant," described in 2 Samuel 7:12-17 and also in 1 Chronicles 17:11-17, in which it was declared that David's future Descendant would build for God a spiritual house, the New Testament Church. The deity of Christ is specifically set forth in the words addressed to David: "I will be to Him for a Father, and He shall be to me a Son, whom, if He transgresses, I shall punish with a rod of men."<sup>45</sup> In this remarkable Messianic prophecy

David was told that the Messiah would be Yahweh's Son, and a true man will He be, who will also be accounted a sinner. The sins of others will be placed upon Him; although He was innocent, He will be treated as a sinner. The vicarious suffering of the Messiah, accurately described in Isaiah 53:3-6, is also here set forth. However, God's grace will not be taken from Him, because once he had atoned for sin, Yahweh's grace will rest upon him; it will not be taken from Him, as God's grace had been removed from Saul, David's predecessor on the kingly throne.

115 The Davidic Covenant is referred to in Psalms 89 and 132.<sup>46</sup> From verses 18-19 of 2 Samuel 7 it is apparent that David recognized what a great honor had been bestowed upon Him lately, that one of his future descendants would be such a unique ruler. David understood the statement of Yahweh, even if he did not grasp and could not comprehend to the fullest extent its significance, as is apparent from his bewildered utterance, for it is related of David that he spent some time before Yahweh on Mount Zion, where the ark of the Covenant was. It took hours, probably days, for David to adjust his finite mind and views to the stupendous truths, which the Almighty had revealed to him of which He had been assured. Finally David cried out: "Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and what is my house, my family, my generation that Thou hast brought me to this point?" (v. 19) David realized that the mercy promised him went beyond all earthly assurance of blessing and that the Messianic promise was to find its fulfillment in his family, his progeny, in a son of his house. This also appears from the next exclamation of David: "And too small is this," namely, all the outward manifestations of God's goodness, as He had experienced them during his lifetime, "in thine eyes, Lord Yahweh, and Thou speakest also of the house of thy servant of far

distant things. And this is the manner of a man, namely, LORD God (v. 19)."<sup>47</sup> By the last statement David was asserting "Thou revealest that Thy Son, who is LORD yahweh, should be born at some future time of my flesh and come out of my family."<sup>48</sup>

David's Last Will and Testament  
2 Samuel 23:1-7

116 In 1543 Luther published Von den Letzten Worten Davids (Concerning the Last Words of David). In this exegetical treatise of 2 Samuel 23:1-7 Luther demonstrated how the Old Testament must be explained in the light of the New, more particularly in constant correlation to Christ."<sup>49</sup> Plass had noted that "a careful study of this writing is indispensable for an appreciation of the mature Luther."<sup>50</sup>

117 This weighty prophecy of David may logically be divided into: 1) an introduction, vv. 1-2; and 2) the prophecy, of which verses 3-5 picture the Messianic salvation and verses 6-7 portray the judgment by the Messiah upon the godless. Luther's rather extensive treatment is different from the exposition given by modern critical commentators of this Samuel pericope, who do not at all consider it as referring to the Messiah or to the Messianic age. Critical Old Testament scholarship contends that this pericope speaks only of David and does not accept Luther's interpretation that it was a prophecy about David's greater son.<sup>51</sup> In the opening of this prophetic utterance, the reader finds evidence that David was a prophet, a receiver of divine revelations from Yahweh. David claims that he speaks what has been placed on his tongue by God Himself. What follows after verse 2 is a message directly from Yahweh. 2 Samuel 23:3 should be rendered: "The God of Israel saith, the Rock of Israel speaketh to me. A Ruler of men (will arise),

just, a Ruler in the fear of God." Concerning verse 3 Luther wrote that a Ruler over men ("there will be," or "there will arise" must be supplied); this Ruler will be a Ruler over men in the absolute sense. He will be just, again meant in the absolute sense. The Messiah is just in the fullest sense of the term, that is, without fault or blame (Jer. 23:5; Zech. 9:9). David announces that the Messiah will be "a Ruler in the fear of God." This just Ruler about whom David speaks is not merely an ordinary ruler, but the King Messiah; because of all the physical descendants of David the Messiah alone can truly be said to have exercised His rule over men in the spirit of God. Thus in his last will and testimony David has his eyes fixed upon the Messiah, to whom also he was directing his nation.

118 Luther claimed that in verse 4 rich blessings are described as flowing from this unique and remarkable King.<sup>52</sup> Verse 4 should read: "And as light of the morning when the sun rises." The subject is missing in this verse and Luther leaves it indefinite.<sup>53</sup> This would mean that in verse 4a the reader finds a description of the Messianic age. When the Messiah appears it will be bright upon the earth, just as the morning light beams forth at the rising of the sun. The sad state of affairs is pictured by darkness at the time of the Messiah's coming. However, when the Messiah appears, new life will sprout forth. Parallels for this teaching are found in later Messianic passages, like those of Isaiah 9:2ff. and 60:1ff. The beginning of the New Testament Age will be like the morning without clouds, because the Messiah will take away sin. In one of the last Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, Malachi predicts that the Messiah would arise as the sun of righteousness with healing in his wings. (4:2).



119 Verse 6 of this remarkable Messianic prophecy describes the fact that the Messiah will in the end be a Judge and Condemner of those who rejected Him by unbelief. With the coming of the just Ruler come blessings and the salvation of God, but for the unbelievers the Messiah will become a fearful and terrifying Judge. Like thorns are rooted out and destroyed, so the "sons of Belial will be uprooted and destroyed in their dwellings.<sup>54</sup> So in this prophecy the fact that the Messiah will punish the ungodly in the Great Judgment is declared and agrees with what is described in Matthew 25:31-46 or Revelation 20:10-15.

#### The Messiah in the Psalms

120 On Easter evening Jesus told the group of His followers assembled in a room behind locked doors: "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." (Luke 24:44-45) (NASV) Luther accepted the New Testament writer's assertion that in the Psalter there were predictions about Christ, his life and work.

121 The Book of Psalms was a favorite Old Testament book for the Reformer. Pelikan claimed that "throughout his career Luther paid much attention to the Psalter, as this volume (i.e., No. 14) and its predecessors show."<sup>55</sup> Luther preached on nearly all of the 150 psalms and wrote extensive expositions on a considerable number of them,<sup>56</sup> many of which he treated as Messianic. Throughout his life, beginning with 1513 Luther lectured and wrote his Dictata super Psalterium (Dictations on the Psalter). In the course of these lectures Luther began to see the light of the Gospel of grace. In 1517 the Reformer published his Die sieben Busspsalmen (The Seven

Penitential Psalms). Plass asserted about these psalms that they are an exposition that "is brief, warm, and devout; in the manner that became typical of Luther, it emphasizes the righteousness of Christ."<sup>57</sup> In the American edition the following volumes contain Luther's Psalms interpretations and expositions: Numbers 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

122 Among major Messianic Psalms found in the five books of the Psalter, authored by David, would be the following: 2, 8, 16, 22, 24, 40, 68, 69, 110. A number of Messianic Psalms were written by individuals living at the time of David and contain references which are based upon the promise God gave David in 2 Samuel 7:12-17.

123 The New Testament writers quote more often from the Psalter than from any other Old Testament book. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Psalm authors, both those whose names are mentioned in the superscriptions and those that are not, wrote concerning various aspects of the life, person, states, and offices of the Messiah. Luther said that if a Bible reader wished to see the faith of the Hebrews at its clearest and best, then he should turn to the Psalter, where he would have a book that abounds in expressions of faith in Christ and a longing for Him. In the preface to the Psalter, written for the German Bible, Doctor Luther stated:

The Psalter ought to be a dear and beloved book, if only because it promises Christ's death and resurrection so clearly, and so typifies His kingdom and the conditions and nature of all Christendom that it might well be called the little Bible. It puts everything that is in all the Bible most beautifully and briefly, and is made an Enchiridion, or handbook, so that I have a notion that the Holy Ghost wanted

to take the trouble to compile a short Bible and example-book of all Christendom, or of all saints.<sup>58</sup>

124 Luther, on the strength of the New Testament, found a considerable number of Psalms as Messianic, Psalms written by David, Solomon, Asaph, Korah, and Ethan. Besides those written by David, namely Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 24, 40, 68, 110, and 132, Luther also recognized Psalms 72 by Solomon, 89 by Ethan, 118 and 45, entitled: "A Psalm of the Sons of Korah." In all these Messianic Psalms there are to be found considerable Christological data that could be employed in setting forth a Christology according to systematic lines. They contain Christological materials also found in later Old Testament books and also given explicitly in the New Testament.

125 Psalm 2 has the following title in a modern Luther's German Bible: "Weissagung von Christo, dem ewigen Koenige, seinem Reich und dessen Feinden." Luther in interpreting the 2nd Psalm as Messianic did so on the authority of the New Testament which quotes a number of its verses and treats them as prophetic of Christ.<sup>59</sup> While a number of Psalms exist which speak of the kingship of the Messiah, the second Psalm is special, because it emphasizes His Sonship to the Father Yahweh. The Psalm begins with a prediction that enemies of Yahweh and His anointed are plotting against them. But Yahweh laughs them to scorn. The LORD announces: "I installed My King on Zion, My holy hill." In verses 7-8 the Messiah speaks: "I will again and again tell the decree of Yahweh; He said to me, My Son art Thou, I have begotten Thee." (Hebrews 1:5). Here then is predicated the eternal begetting of the Son by the Father. Further, in Psalm 2 Yahweh says to His Son: "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the nations for Thy right to conquest." The Father

sent His Son, Jesus, and the latter came speaking, not His own words, but the words of the Father (cf. John 14:10). Further in Psalm 2 Yahweh's anointed One is portrayed as worthy of worship. The Psalmist calls upon all who read or hear the Psalm: "Kiss the Son, or He will get angry and you will perish on your way; because His anger can blaze quickly." Verse 9 predicts this fact that Jesus some day will smash His enemies.

126 According to Luther the following Christological truths are taught by Psalm 2:

- 1) The Messiah is eternal, begotten by the Father;
- 2) Christ is a King; 3) Messiah's rule is universal;
- 4) God's Anointed One must be worshipped and obeyed;
- and 5) The Messiah will act as Judge.

127 Psalm 8, not considered by modern Lutheran scholars to be a Messianic Psalm,<sup>60</sup> was so adjudged, however, by the Reformer. Psalm 8 in a modern Luther's German Bible has the title: "Von Christi Reich, Leiden und Herrlichkeit." (Concerning Christ's Kingdom, Suffering and Glorification). This heading represents Luther's stance on Psalm 8. Of this Psalm Luther wrote: "This psalm is one of the most beautiful psalms and a glorious prophecy about Christ."<sup>61</sup>

128 When Luther interpreted Psalm 8 as a prediction about the Messiah, he was following the Epistle to the Hebrews, which quoted the words: "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels," as applying to Christ. The rendering in the Greek New Testament is from the Septuagint. The Hebrew text reads: "Thou has made Him to lack a little of God." Hebrews 2:26 shows that only Jesus could be meant, because as God He assumed our human nature with all its weaknesses and lowliness, who was made in the likeness of man and was found in fashion as a man (Philippians 2:7-8). The humiliation and

exaltation of the Messiah are set forth in Psalm 8. Verse 5 contains a succinct assertion in which the two states are taught. "For thou has crowned Him with honor and glory" refers to the Messiah's exaltation. David, by inspiration of the Spirit, was able to declare a truth, much later enunciated by Paul: "Thou has put all things under His feet." Christ is Lord of Creation. In Jesus the Messiah the Name of God has been revealed in all its glory.

129 Psalm 16 was interpreted by Luther as a Messianic Psalm.<sup>62</sup> The title for it in modern Luther's German Bible was: "Weissagung von Christi Leiden und Sterben." Luther was simply adopting the New Testament's interpretation of this Davidic Psalm.<sup>63</sup> Psalm 16 was employed by Peter in his Pentecost sermon as predicting truths about Christ's death and resurrection. Peter told the people who had come from various parts of the Roman Empire: "The patriarch being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he should set one upon his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left to Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption (Acts 2: 25-31)." St. Paul in Acts 13:35 also applied this Psalm to Christ. Philippians 2:6-11 might be said to be an excellent commentary on Psalm 16.

130 Psalms 22, 40, and 69 were considered by Luther as Passion Psalms.<sup>64</sup> In 1521 Luther wrote an exposition of Psalm 22. Commenting on its contents, the Doctor said that Christ endured not merely a token of suffering but that the Messiah suffered what all men should have suffered. In the modern German Bible the heading for this Psalm is: "Concerning Christ's Suffering and Kingdom." This reflects Luther's teaching on Psalm 22. Verses 1-21 describe Messiah's glory. In verse 10 the Messiah says: "But thou art He that took me out of my

mother's womb." In this verse and others in Psalm 22 the Messiah's mother is mentioned but not His earthly father, as is also the case in passages like Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14 or Micah 5:2. The crucifixion of Jesus is virtually predicted in verse 16: "They pierced My hands and My feet." When Psalm 22:1-2 is read as a Messianic Psalm it reads like an episode from the first Good Friday, and sets forth a Christological truth relative to Christ's priestly office.

131 In Luther's Summaries of the Psalms, published at the beginning of 1533, the Reformer recognized Psalm 40 as a prayer spoken by the preincarnate Christ in prophetic anticipation of His suffering."<sup>65</sup> Luther once wrote verses seven and eight in someone's book and gave these words the interpretation which follows:

Let the Holy Spirit Himself read this Book to His Own if He desires to be understood. For it does not write about men or about making a living (vom Bauch), as all other books do, but about the fact that God's Son was obedient to His Father for us and fulfilled His will. Whoever does not need this wisdom should let this Book lie; it does not benefit him anyway. It teaches another and eternal life, of which reason knows nothing and is able to comprehend nothing. Let him, then, who would study in this Book make up his mind to look for nothing in it except that of which the psalms speak: that the Son of God willingly and obediently became a burnt offering for us in order to appease God's wrath.<sup>66</sup>

132 Psalm 45 was interpreted messianically by Luther. The title for this Psalm in the Modern

German Bible is: "Prophecy concerning the Bridegroom, Christ, and the Bride, the Church." That this Psalm made predictions about Christ is easily seen if Luther's lectures on Psalm 45, begun in 1532, are read. According to the Reformer, verses 6-9 describe Christ and not just a secular ruler.<sup>67</sup>

133 Psalm 69 has the title: "The Messiah in His Suffering." The reason why Luther considered this Psalm as Messianic,<sup>68</sup> no doubt, was occasioned by the exegetical fact that it is found referred to no less than seven times in the New Testament, either by quotation or by unmistakable implication, as prophetic of Christ and the Messianic period (Cf. John 15:25; Matthew 27:34; John 19:29).

134 Psalm 68 in the modern Luther's German Bible is entitled: "Prophecy of Christ's Exaltation and His Glorious Power." While on the surface the Psalm spoke about the celebration of God's entry into the Sanctuary on Zion and His rule over the whole world, Luther considered the Psalm typical of the Messianic victories,<sup>69</sup> certain citations being even directly prophetic, as Paul shows. Paul cited verse 18 as a prediction of Christ's ascension.

135 Psalm 89, ascribed to Ethan the Esrahite, has the title in the modern Luther's German Bible: "Concerning the Messiah and His Kingdom."<sup>70</sup> Luther believed that this Psalm substantiated the Messianic character of 2 Samuel 7:12-17. In verses 3-4 Ethan speaks of the eternal covenant God made with David with regard to the Messiah who would build the house of the Christian Church. Beginning at verse 19 Ethan depicts the rule of the Messiah.

136 In Psalm 109 Luther also found Messianic material. The heading given for the contents of this inspired poem is in a modern Luther's German

Bible: "Prophecy Concerning Judas and the Unfaithfulness against Christ by the Jews, and Their Curse." Luther in a collection entitled "The Four Psalms of Comfort," dedicated to Queen Mary of Hungary, in the beginning of his exposition of this Psalm wrote: "David composed this psalm about Christ, who speaks the entire psalm in the first person against Judas, His betrayer, and against Judaism as a whole, describing their ultimate faith. In Acts 1:20 Peter applied this Psalm to Judas when they were selecting Matthias to replace him."<sup>71</sup> P. E. Kretzmann, a great admirer and user of Luther's exegesis, does not follow the Reformer in his Messianic interpretation of Psalm 109.<sup>72</sup>

137 Psalm 110, the most cited Psalm in the New Testament, was understood by Christ and the writer of Hebrews to speak about the Messiah, Christ Jesus. The title in a modern Luther's German Bible reads: "A Psalm of Christ, our King and High Priest." This Psalm is totally prophetic, placing before the believers of the Old Testament the Messiah as Lord of David.<sup>73</sup> No other Psalms, no other prophecy is cited so often as this poem. Cf. Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34; 1 Cor. 15:25; Hebrews 1:13; 1 Peter 3:22. According to Psalm 110:4, the Messiah as Priest purifies and blesses people. The chief of this David prophecy rests upon the King and His Kingdom. On this rather short Psalm Luther wrote a lengthy exposition which in the American edition occupies about 115 pages.<sup>74</sup>



### LECTURE III

#### Luther's Christological Views from Solomon's Writings through the Pre-Exilic, Exilic, and the Postexilic Writings.

138 In Lecture III Luther's Christological views found in the period between Solomon's reign and Malachi will be explicated. The presentation will continue to set forth the Messianic prophecies according to major periods of revelation.

#### F. The Disruption Period (970-760 B.C.)

139 The sources for this period, covering the time between the death of David and the appearance of the first writing prophets are the writings of Solomon and certain wisdom literary works. Some scholars hold that Job was written by Solomon or at least that this anonymous book saw its productions during the Solomonic period.<sup>1</sup> Job contains at least one passage that has been understood by Christians down through the ages as being a Messianic prophecy, namely, 19:25-27. Luther translated the first part of this passage "Ich weiss das mein Erloeser lebt." (I know that my Redeemer lives). Luther rendered the Hebrew word Goel by "Erloeser," "Savior." (This passage was understood as predicting the day of judgment when all men would appear before Christ the Judge and when Christians would see Jesus for themselves.) Modern critical Lutheran scholars have rejected Luther's understanding and claim that all that Job was asserting was that before his death God would appear to vindicate him.<sup>2</sup> The Formula of Concord which cited Job 19:26-27 as prediction of the Christian's resurrection was

simply following Luther's understanding of these verses as speaking of Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> This Joban passage depicts the Christological truth discussed in systematic theology under the last steps of the state of exaltation and the belief expressed in the Third Article of the Apostolic Creed: "I believe in the resurrection of the body."

140 Relative to the Song of Solomon, called in German "das Hohelied," Luther did not interpret the Song of Songs as a prophetic poem, which sets forth in an allegorical or mystical manner the relation between Christ, the one Bridegroom of our souls, and His Church, the Bride.<sup>4</sup> Both in the exegetical literature of the Wisconsin Synod and of the Missouri Synod the Messianic interpretation has been held and defended.<sup>5</sup>

141 In another wisdom book, written mostly by Solomon, there is found a passage that Luther interpreted Messianically, namely, Proverbs 8:22-31. This pericope has been variously interpreted by Biblical scholars. The entire eighth chapter differs from the preceding chapters in this that wisdom is used here as a person. This was done in the beginning of Proverbs, where wisdom is pictured as the divine medium of creation, 3:19-26. In chapter 8 both of these concepts are combined, and Wisdom herself is described as to her part in creation. These ten important verses of chapter 8 are divided into two halves: 22-25, depicting the existence of Wisdom before all things were created. In the second half, verses 27-31, Wisdom's part in the creation is related. Luther identified the personalized or, better, hypostatized Wisdom with the second Person of the Trinity.<sup>6</sup>

142 Just as in Psalm 2 the King Messiah speaks, so in Proverbs 8:22ff Wisdom speaks. The Messiah declares: "Yahweh possessed me at the beginning of

his way, before the works of long ago." It is not correct to render the Hebrew "Kawnawni" as "created," as was done in The Revised Standard Version, Good News Bible, and The New English Bible.<sup>7</sup> No, in 8:22 the Wisdom of God speaks. Luther rendered the Hebrew as "Der Herr hat mir gehabt im Anfang." Wisdom was not merely an attribute of God which He created to act as a Medium for purposes of creation. The New Testament says that the LOGOS was with God the Father from the beginning, and Colossians teaches that Christ was the Medium of creation, or as Hebrews states that "in these last days He has spoken by a Son whom He made the heir of everything and by whom He made the worlds," (Hebrews 1:2)

143 Solomon was also the author of Psalm 72, a Psalm considered by Luther as a Messianic poem.<sup>8</sup> Luther labeled this: "Of Christ and His Kingdom." The words of Psalm 72 would not fit the reign either of David or Solomon. Psalm 72 describes the coming reign of a King of righteousness, whose dominion extends over all the earth, and which will never end. Righteousness, redemption, a universal empire and endless life are the characteristics of this King heralded in this Psalm. This King could not have been Solomon or any other king. Solomon in prophetic vision saw the coming and the glory of the Promised One, who was David's greater Son, the King of Righteousness.

#### G. The Period of the Eighth Century Prophets (800-700 B.C.)

144 During the eighth pre-Christian century there was an efflorescence of Messianic prophecy. Jonah, Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Isaiah contain many Messianic predictions about Christ. In his preface to the Prophetic Books Luther made the following assertion about Christ:

Therefore we Christians ought not be such shameful, sated, ungrateful wiseacres, but should read and use the prophets with earnestness and profit. For, first of all, they proclaim and bear witness to the kingdom of Christ, in which we now live, and in which all believers in Christ have heretofore lived and will live until the end of the world.<sup>9</sup>

145 The swallowing of Jonah by a great fish which Yahweh especially created was said to be a type of Christ's death and resurrection from the grave and was for Luther no problem, since he does not question the miraculous or doubt clear New Testament interpretations of Old Testament events (cf. Luke 11:29-32).<sup>10</sup>

146 Hosea, Jonah, and Amos were three prophets who directed their prophetic messages to the Northern Kingdom. In writing about the prophet Hosea Luther in his Preface to Hosea declared:

The first of two duties was that, in his time, he preached hard against idolatry and bravely rebuked the people, together with his princes and priests, because of which he certainly tasted of death, like the others, and had to die as a heretic against the priests and a rebel against the king; for that is a prophetic and apostolic death, and so Christ Himself had to die. The second was that he also prophesied powerfully and very encouragingly about Christ and His kingdom, as is shown especially by chapters ii, xiii, xiv.<sup>11</sup>

147 From Luther's Lectures on Hosea (Zwickau Text) it is clear that the concluding verses of

chapters 1, 2, and 3 (1:10-2:1; 2:19-22; 3:5) were considered Messianic by the Reformer. Hosea 3:5: "And after that, Israel will come and search for the Lord their God and David their king and they shall come trembling to the LORD and His blessings in the last time," Luther understood as describing the conversion of the Jews in the Apostolic period.<sup>12</sup>

148 Luther interpreted Hosea 13:14: "I want to free them from the grave and redeem them from death, I want to be a plague to you, death, and a pest to you, grave," as a prediction of Christ.<sup>13</sup> The beginning of chapter 14 is believed by Luther to speak about the kingdom of Christ.<sup>14</sup>

#### The Messianic Prophecies of Amos

149 In his Preface to the Prophet Amos (1532) Luther summarized the contents of Amos as follows:

He is violent, too, and denounces the people of Israel throughout almost the whole book, until the end of the last chapter, where he foretells Christ and His kingdom and closes his book with that.<sup>15</sup>

150 In his lectures on Amos (Altenburg text) Luther wrote about 9:11:

This passage is quoted in Acts 15:16-18. Let me summarize it. "When I have thus destroyed the kingdom and the priesthood, I will gather together the pieces of the tent of David which has fallen and rebuild it. Into it will come even people from every nation who are going to believe, although they are not of the house of David." And I have said, we must properly take this to mean the Kingdom of Christ.<sup>16</sup>

## Messianic Prophecy in Joel

151 In the Preface to Joel the Reformer wrote:

In the end of the second chapter, and from there on, he prophesies of the Kingdom of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, and speaks of the everlasting Jerusalem . . . I . . . hold that Joel's meaning is as follows, --As he calls the Christian Church the everlasting Jerusalem, so he calls it also the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for the reason that all the world is summoned to the Christian Church by the Word, and there is judged and punished by preaching, since all of them together are sinners before God. So Christ says, "The Spirit of truth shall punish the world because of sin." For the Valley of Jehoshaphat is the valley of judgment. So, also, Hosea calls the Christian Church the Valley of Achor.<sup>17</sup>

## The Messianic Prophecies of Micah

152 Micah and Isaiah were contemporaries. Luther claimed that these two prophets "used almost the same words in preaching Christ's message, as though they had consulted."<sup>18</sup> The Reformer summarized Micah's message like this:

He is one of the finest prophets, who rebukes the people severely for their idolatry, and constantly refers to the coming of Christ and His Kingdom. In one respect he is unique among the prophets, for he points with certainty to Bethlehem, naming it as the town where Christ was to be born. For this reason, he was famous under the Old Covenant, as Matthew shows in chapter ii.<sup>19</sup>

153 Micah 5:2 is translated by Luther in such a way as to set forth the eternity of the Messiah, for the passage is rendered: "welches Ausgang von Anfang und von Ewigkeit her gewesen ist." Modern critical scholarship renders 5:2 so that the eternity of the Son is not taught.<sup>20</sup> In his Lectures of Micah the Wittenberg Reformer expounded at length on the eternity of the Messiah.<sup>21</sup>

Even though Micah predicted in his book the end of Israel and Judah, yet Luther wrote that Christ will come and make all things well.<sup>22</sup>

#### The Messianic Prophecies of Isaiah

154 Isaiah has been called "the Evangelical Prophet" because of the large number of Messianic prophecies contained in both parts of the book, in chapters 1-39 and 40-66. As far as Luther was concerned, he did not subscribe to more than one Isaiah; both sections he attributed to the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amos, as did also the New Testament.<sup>23</sup> The first Messianic prophecy in Isaiah is also found in Micah 4:1-4. In both books the prophets Micah and Isaiah come from the destruction of the Judaic kingdom to the new and eternal kingdom of Christ. The passages cannot, averred Luther, refer to the rebuilding of an earthly kingdom, although this is the way the Jews took it.<sup>24</sup> Luther understood Isaiah 2:2, where the latter days are spoken of, as being the days of the Messianic Age. In verse 2 Luther claimed that the prophet spoke of the New Testament Church which will be established in every part of the world, high above all false religions and churches.<sup>25</sup> The Gospel of God's love would go out from the Christian Church. The statement that the Messiah would judge among many peoples was interpreted by the Reformer as looking forward to Luke 24:47, that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luther wrote on Micah 4:3: "This is

the power, or fruit of the Gospel, that it was sent out from Jerusalem by that new King, who judges in the Word and in the Spirit. He will judge not just the Jews but many people."<sup>26</sup>

155 In his Preface to the Book of Isaiah Luther stated that there are three types of prophecies in Isaiah: 1) those speaking about Assyria; 2) those that contain predictions about Babylonia; and 3) those that are concerned with the Kingdom of Christ. Luther asserted concerning the latter: "He disposes and prepares them to expect the coming Kingdom of Christ, of which he prophesies more often than does any other prophet."<sup>27</sup>

#### Isaiah 4:2-6

156 Luther considered these verses as a prophecy of Christ. The theme of this short chapter is "Christ: the Sanctuary of the Believer." In that day the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious." Luther wrote that after Jerusalem was laid waste the Branch should be glorious. The BRANCH was Christ. The kingdom of the Jews was once glorious in a physical way, but the kingdom of Christ will be glorious in the spirit. Isaiah, Luther believes, calls Christ One Who comes from the fruit of the land because He was born great from the earth, and it is His greatness that He can prevail over all enemies and protect all His own; and this is a description of Christ as He defends us.<sup>28</sup> Verses 3 and 4 of chapter 4 according to the Reformer describe the benefits which Christ distributes to the elect.

#### The Immanuel Prophecies of Chapter 7, 9, 11

157 Chapters 7-12 have been called "the Immanuel Book" of Isaiah. Isaiah 7:14 contains the prophecy of the Virgin Conception and Birth. In his Preface to Isaiah Luther wrote: "He (i.e. Isaiah)



even describes, in chapter vii, the Mother of Christ, how she is to conceive and bear Him without injury to her virginity."<sup>29</sup> Luther does not agree with modern critical Lutheran scholars<sup>30</sup> that the word almah does not mean an unmarried young women with whom no man has had sexual relations. Luther claims that almah and parthenos designate a virgin. Luther took up this question of almah's meaning in his treatise: "That Jesus Christ Was Born A Jew," and defended his translation of "Jungfrau" in a very able manner.<sup>31</sup> In his Lectures on Isaiah, in commenting on Isaiah 7:14, Luther defends the meaning of virgin for almah and does so specifically on the strength of the New Testament (Luke 1:22, 23; Matt. 1:22-23).

158 When this child of the virgin is born, Isaiah predicted, He will be called Immanuel, that means, "God-with-us." In Isaiah 7:14 is an important Christological teaching, namely, that the Messiah would be God and man in one person. Here is a proof text for the teaching known as "the theanthropic person" of Christ.<sup>32</sup> Over 700 years before the Messiah's birth at Bethlehem, Isaiah, by the Spirit's inspiration, announced this unique fact of history, that the Messiah would be God and man. This was fulfilled when, as John reported in his Gospel, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (1:14).

#### Isaiah 9:2-7

##### "The Child with the Remarkable Names"

159 This great Christmas text is introduced by the announcement "that the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light." Matthew 4:9 refers to this Isaianic text when Jesus began His Galilean ministry. This pericope reaches its climax in verses 6 and 7: "For unto us a child is born, for unto us a son is given; and His name shall be called

Miracle, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." This passage clearly contains the Christological doctrines of the Messiah's deity and humanity. The same Christological teachings contained in the name Emmanuel is explicated by a number of distinctive and descriptive names given God's Anointed One. The first name in this series of remarkable titles is the Hebrew word pele, which means "miracle." The Messiah would be a Miracle! The Child is also "God-Almighty." The name "Everlasting Father" was explained by Luther as follows: "This, then, indicates the work and business of the King, not His person. This name fits no one else. He always increases his reign, He always begets children and rules over them. He always remains the Father, He does not assume the role of tyrant, His children are always His beloved."<sup>33</sup> The Reformer claimed that the Messiah is called "Prince of Peace" because "the kingdom of Christ is grace, comfort, forgiveness of sin, joy, peace."<sup>34</sup> The kingship of Christ was different from that of David; the latter's kingship was physical, but Christ has begun the spiritual reign over the peoples which will last forever.

Isaiah 11:1-2: "The Rod Out of Jesse's Stem"

160 In chapter 11:1-2, the third Immanuel passage, new features appear in Isaiah's picture of the coming Messiah. He is to be of the house of Jesse, and from his roots a Branch will produce fruit. The LORD'S Spirit will rest on this Branch. Luther in his Lectures on Isaiah said that Jesus is spoken of in chapter 11.<sup>35</sup> According to the Doctor, chapter 11 describes Christ's spiritual kingdom. Again in this chapter both the deity and humanity of the Messiah are described and emphasized. In 11:1-10 the following significant teachings are taught:

- 1) Messiah's lowly origin;
- 2) His possession of the

Spirit of Yahweh; 3) His skill and fairness in ministering justice (vv. 3-6; and 4) His reign inaugurating an era of perfect peace (vv. 8-9).

161 Isaiah 11:2 contains the prophecy of the resting of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh on the Messiah. Filled with these gifts, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the LORD, the result will be "that the fear of the LORD will please Him." This prophecy was fulfilled regarding Jesus of Nazareth, because he was filled with the Holy Spirit without measure.

Isaiah 25: 6-9: "Messiah's Banquet"

162 Luther considered Isaiah 25:6-7 a Messianic passage. In these verses the Reformer declared that Isaiah "is speaking of the abundance of the Gospel."<sup>36</sup>

163 Relative to chapter 24 and 25 Luther was of the opinion that they have in a figurative way described the devastation of the ungodly synagogue, but the prophet intersperses them with references to the kingdom of Christ, who does not forsake His own afflicted but at length frees those who by faith have been well exercised in these things.<sup>37</sup>

Isaiah 32:1-4

164 This passage seems to continue in the same form and spirit of the Emmanuel passages in chapters 7-11. However, Luther, while claiming that Jerome's Commentaries, X, 371 treats these verses as describing the reign of Christ, does not believe that the Messiah is spoken about.<sup>38</sup>

Isaiah 35:

"The Joyful State of Christ's Kingdom"

165 It was Luther's belief that the entire beautiful thirty-fifth chapter dealt with the new kingdom of Christ.<sup>39</sup> The title in a modern German Luther Bible is: "Gluecklicher Zustand der Kirche des Neuen Testaments." The Doctor concluded his exposition of this chapter with these words:

This is an excellent description of the church in this very short chapter, from which many New Testament writers have drawn, namely, that this church is happy and joyful, safe from all stratagems of Satan, that consciences are not burdened with various and divergent traditions, but that it is redeemed of the Lord, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and that it goes on happy and rejoicing in gladness.<sup>40</sup>

Messianic Prophecies in Chapters 40-66:

"The Book of Comfort"

166 The opening chapter of the second major section of Isaiah was considered by Luther as speaking of the future of Christ and the coming of John the Baptist, the waypreparer for Jesus.<sup>41</sup> In the old Lutheran Lectionary system Isaiah 40:1-11 was the appointed Old Testament lesson for the birthday of John the Baptist. Isaiah's "voice crying in the wilderness" was said by Matthew 3:3 to be fulfilled in the coming of John the Baptist.

The Four Servant Passages

(Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:4-11; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12)

167 While the kingship of the Messiah is especially emphasized in chapters 1-39, in 40-66, however, it will also be true of the Messiah that He will be

the suffering Servant of Yahweh. The prophetic and the priestly offices are particularly prominent in the Four Servant Songs. Liberal Lutheran scholars have rejected the Christological teachings taught by the Servant Songs.<sup>42</sup>

168 The following is a composite of Christological truths taught by the four major Servant Songs (42:1-12; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; and 52:13-53:12):<sup>43</sup>

169 1. The Servant is identified with the Messiah as a humanly-born prophet. Thus in 50:4 the Servant says: "The Lord God gives me the speech of the learned, so that I know how to talk to the weary. Morning after morning He wakes me to hear, so I will listen like a learner. (Cf. also 49:2)." That the Messiah is God's Servant, who is empowered by the Holy Spirit (42:2,3), is a truth attested to by Matthew in chapter 12:18-21.

170 2. While this Servant of Yahweh is a human prophet, He is greater than any other prophet, for Isaiah's description of this coming prophet is not only that He is a sufferer, but that His suffering is vicarious, for He carries the cares and sicknesses of His fellowmen. Chapter 53:4 states: "But surely He will take on Him our suffering and carry out pains but we will think that God afflicts Him, strikes Him, and makes Him suffer." According to the New Testament this is the function of the ministry of Christ that was fulfilled in Jesus' healing ministry (Matt. 8:17).

171 3. The Suffering Servant, furthermore, meets unbelief, as chapter 53:1 declares: "Who could believe what we have heard," and the Messiah becomes an object of reproach: "I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and the

spitting (Is. 50:6; Matt. 26:67; 27:6). However, as the Fourth Servant Song proclaims, in all his suffering and affliction "he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth (53:7)."

172 4. The Messiah is depicted as condemned and as a criminal and treated as a wicked person in His death; the Servant willingly surrenders His life as a Person who vicariously suffers for others even though He had committed no wrong or sin (53:8,9). The prophet declared: "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned everyone to his own way: and Yahweh has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all (53:6; cf. also vv. 5,12)." Isaiah predicted that God would make the Messiah's "soul" an offering for sin (Hebrew asham, a guilt or trespass offering), v. 10, and because of this sacrifice, by this atoning act "he shall sprinkle many nations." (52:13)

173 5. The Messiah will by his vicarious death accomplish Yahweh's pleasure (53:10). He will receive honorable burial with the rich (v. 9), a prediction fulfilled according to Matthew 27:57-60. The Messiah's sacrifice avails to justify the many (53:11). As a result of His atoning work, Christ will see numerous spiritual progeny (v. 10). He will intercede for the transgressors (53:12) and

174 6. The Messiah will become a light to the Gentiles (42:6; 46:9).

175 7. The Messiah will not fail in His mission on earth: He shall not fail or be discouraged, till He has set judgment in the earth, and the isles of the sea, these shall wait for His law (42:4; Cf. 52:15 and Romans 15:21).

176 The Servant Songs are rich in Christological data, setting forth in a unique manner the Savior's prophetic and priestly offices.

#### Messianic Passages in Isaiah 60-66

177 Luther recognized at least three major passages in the last seven chapters of Isaiah. Chapter 60:1-12 predicts the universal power and the extent of Messiah's reign. Luther preached a sermon on this text, in which he pointed out that the Jesus here predicted was being rejected by the Jews of Christ's day.<sup>44</sup> Isaiah 61:1-3 is considered by some scholars as another and fifth Servant Song.<sup>45</sup> Christ in his hometown Nazareth said that this Scripture was fulfilled in their ears. Isaiah 61:1-2 describes predictively "the Lord's Year of Jubilee."<sup>46</sup> Isaiah 63:1-6 depicts the Messiah's coming as the Avenger of His people. In this text Luther mentioned the fact that in Isaiah 63:9 "The Angel of His Presence" was the preincarnate Christ, the same as mentioned in Isaiah 61:1 or Malachi 3:1.<sup>47</sup>

#### H. Messianic Prophecies Found in the Seventh Century Prophets until the Fall of Jerusalem (650-587 B.C.)

178 The prophets active in this period of revelational history are: Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Obadiah.

#### Habakkuk and Justification by Faith

179 Habakkuk has been called the "Morning Star of the Reformation," because Paul in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11 and the author of Hebrews 10:37-38 refer to Habakkuk 2:4 and interpret it as teaching justification by faith. Luther translated Habakkuk 2:4: "Siehe, wer halsstarrig ist, der

wird keine Ruhe in seinem Herzen haben: denn der Gerechte lebet seines Glaubens." The latter part of that verse would be rendered in English: "and the just shall live by his faith." Modern critical Lutheran scholars disagree with Luther's understanding of the Hebrew *emunah*.<sup>48</sup> There are a number of places in Luther's writings where he asserts that by his meditations on Habakkuk 2:4 and Romans 1:17 he finally came to realize that those verses spoke of justification by faith.<sup>49</sup> Luther came to understand the Habakkuk passage as saying: "The just shall live by his faith, that is, he who believes in God's merciful promises in the Gospel would and does, by his confidence, receive eternal life as a gift from God."

180 Both Jeremiah and Habakkuk prophesied during the reigns of King Josiah (640/39-609 B.C.). Jeremiah contains a number of Messianic prophecies, but not as many as Isaiah has. Jeremiah 23:5-6 is one which is outstanding, because it clearly teaches a number of important Christological truths.

#### Jeremiah 23:5-6

#### "The Prophecy about the Righteous Branch"

181 In his Preface to Jeremiah Luther wrote:

Like all other prophets, he prophesies of Christ and His kingdom especially in the twenty-third and thirty-first chapters, where he clearly prophesies of the person of Christ, of His kingdom, of the New Testament and the end of the Old Testament.<sup>50</sup>

182 In Jeremiah 23:5-6 Jeremiah announced that Yahweh will gather His scattered flock, will give to them shepherds and will feed them. He will raise unto David a righteous Branch (or Sprout).



The Branch title was already given in Isaiah 4:2, 11:10 and was there employed of the Messiah, who in Jeremiah is the same as Yahweh, for His name shall be called "Yahweh is our righteousness." His rule as King is that over a spiritual Israel. In this remarkable passage we have an Old Testament assertion of the New Testament's teaching of Christ, who declared: "I and the Father are one." In Jeremiah 33:14-26 Jerusalem is called "Yahweh is our righteousness." Jerusalem here for Luther would mean the Christian Church, in which the righteousness of Christ is offered sinners through the Gospel of Christ.<sup>51</sup>

#### The Prophecy of The New Covenant (31:31-34)

183 In this prophecy Jeremiah was announcing the replacement of the old Sinaitic covenant, for Yahweh will write His law not on tables of stone, but in the hearts of His people. Yahweh will reveal himself to each soul and will take away all sin. The prophet sees the new covenant in force after the close of the Exile, amid the restored captives in the land of Israel.<sup>52</sup> Luther claimed that this is one of the two prophecies to which Christ referred when he said in John 6:45: "It is written in the prophets: They shall be taught of God."<sup>53</sup> The prophecies of Jeremiah were fulfilled in the Messianic Age or the New Testament dispensation. Through the prophet Jeremiah the Holy Spirit revealed the significant truth that the Mosaic covenant and ritual were done away by the death of Christ.

#### The Messianic Prophecies of Ezekiel

184 Luther wrote two different prefaces for the Book of Ezekial, one in 1532 and the other in 1545. The New Preface of the Prophet Ezekial (1545) contains a number of significant statements about the relation of the Old Testament to the New.

It asserts specifically that apart from Christ the Jews cannot understand the Old Testament.<sup>54</sup> The Reformer warned his readers not to be influenced by the commentaries of the rabbis, since some Christians of Luther's time were clinging to the rabbis and were thereby judaizing the Old Testament more than the Jews themselves did.<sup>55</sup>

185 The inaugural vision of Ezekial, Luther averred, was "nothing more than a revelation of the kingdom of Christ in faith here on earth, in all four corners of the whole world, according to Psalm xix."<sup>56</sup> According to Luther, a major purpose of Ezekial's prophetic book was to emphasize the New Kingdom. Unfortunately, the Reformer said, the Jews cannot understand this truth, "for God promises to create something new in the land and make a new covenant, not like the old covenant of Moses that they dream about. This is plainly there in Jeremiah xxxi and many more places."<sup>57</sup>

186 In the same preface Luther claimed that Ezekial taught the people to expect a return from the Babylonian captivity, "but prophesies more about the new Israel and the Kingdom of Christ. That is his vision of the chariot, and it is also the temple, in the last part of his book."<sup>58</sup>

#### The Good Shepherd Prophecy of Ezekiel 34:11-16, 23 and 24

187 Christ as the Good Shepherd is the theme of this passage. The chief thoughts of these verses are:

1. The Good Shepherd seeks those that have strayed and gathers those that are scattered, vv. 11-12.
2. The Good Shepherd feeds those who are His sheep in green pastures and makes them lie down safely, vv. 13-14.

3. The Good Shepherd especially cares for the weak and sickly, v. 16.
4. God does this through the Messiah, vv. 23-24.

188 The language of Ezekial 34 is beautifully expressed in brief form in Psalm 23. The New Testament fulfillment is found in passages like Luke 19:10; 15:3-7; John 10:11-18, 27-30; 1 Peter 2:25 and Hebrews 11:21, 22, where Christ and the apostles employ this imagery from Ezekial.

#### The Messianic Prophecies of Daniel

189 Luther in his Preface to the Prophet Daniel was convinced that Daniel was a prophet, both before God and the world. Thus the Reformer wrote:

First before God, for he, above all other prophets, had this special prophecy to give, that is, his work was not only to prophesy of Christ, like others, but also to count the times and years, determine them, and fix them with certainty. Moreover, he arranged the kingdoms with their doings, down to the fixed time of Christ, in the right succession, and does it so finely that one cannot make a mistake about the coming of Christ, unless one does it willfully, as do the Jews.<sup>59</sup>

190 Luther's understanding of the Book of Daniel is totally different from that which is being advanced by Lutheran historical-critical scholars who reject prophecy and claim that the events of Daniel terminate with the Seleucid rule of Near Eastern history.<sup>60</sup>

## The Prophecy of the Seventy Heptads

191 In his Preface to Daniel Luther referred to the famous prophecy in 9:25-27, the Seventy Heptads (by some called Seventy Week-years). In his interpretation Luther declared:

For Daniel prophesies boldly and determines plainly that the coming of Christ and the beginning of His kingdom (that is, His baptism and preaching) is to happen five hundred and ten years after King Cyrus (Daniel ix), and the Empire of the Persians and Greeks is to be at an end, and the Roman Empire in force (Daniel xii, ix), that Christ, therefore, must certainly come at the time of the Roman Empire, when it was in its best state, and that it was to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple, since after it no other empire was to come, but the end of the world was to follow, as Daniel clearly announces in Daniel ii and vii.<sup>61</sup>

192 Luther claimed that all the visions and dreams end with Christ's kingdom and advent, and that Christ's coming is important and final; in fact, it was for these that the Book of Daniel was written.

### I. The Postexilic Period of Divine Revelation and Its Messianic Prophecies

193 Haggai and Zechariah are known as the Temple Prophets because it was through their prophesying and activity that the Jews were galvanized into action between 520-515 B.C. to complete the building of the Temple begun in 535 B.C. and shortly thereafter stopped.

Haggai 2:6-9: "The Desire of All Nations"

194 Luther believed that Haggai was the prophet that Daniel spoke of in Daniel 9:25, when he predicted: "From the time when the command goeth out that Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, until the prince, Christ, there are seven weeks and two and sixty weeks."<sup>62</sup> Of the four messages given by Haggai between September 1, 620 B.C. and December 24, 520 B.C. the second message contains a prophecy about Christ, according to Luther. Thus the Reformer wrote:

In the second chapter he prophesies of Christ also, and says that He shall soon come, "A comfort to all nations," by which he indicates in a mystery that the kingdom of the Jews shall have an end, and the kingdoms of all the world be destroyed and become subject to Christ. This had happened before now and is constantly happening until the Last Day, when it will all be fulfilled.<sup>63</sup>

The Messianic Prophecies of Zechariah

195 Zechariah has probably more Messianic prophecies than any other of the Minor Prophets. There are Messianic predictions in both major sections of Zechariah: chapters 1-8 and 9-14, both of which are characterized by a distinctive style for each section. According to the testimony of the New Testament a number of predictions pertaining to the last week of the Messiah during the state of humiliation are found, especially in chapters 9-14. Luther did not share the positions and views of modern critical Lutheran scholarship on the authorship of Zechariah 9-14.<sup>64</sup>

196 In his Preface to the prophet Zechariah, Luther stated:

In the sixth chapter, he prophesies of the Gospel of Christ and the spiritual temple, to be built in all the world, because the Jews denied Him and would not have Him.<sup>65</sup>

197 As far as Luther was concerned the entire prophecy of Zechariah 1-8 was built around the theme of the Temple, and under this figure he foretells the Church of the New Testament.<sup>66</sup>

The Coronation of Joshua: Zechariah 6:12-13

198 This text reads, when literally rendered:

"And speak to him (Joshua), saying 'Thus says Yahweh of Hosts, behold a Man, Branch (Sprout) is His name, and from His own place He branches out (grows up as a branch), and He shall build the Temple of Yahweh; and He shall bear the honor, and he shall sit and rule upon His throne, and He shall be a priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between the two of them.'"

199 In his Lectures of Zechariah, delivered in 1516 in Latin, Luther has this interpretation of verse 12:

Therefore it becomes clear that we must not apply this text to Joshua the high priest, who is merely a sign and figure of that coming Man about whom he speaks, namely, the growing Christ. Just so, too, the things that follow will clearly state this when He is described as the One who is going to sit on His own throne, which was not the prerogative of the high priest. For the kingdom and royal power belonged only to the tribe of Judah, not to the tribe of Levi. So when he says here that

both come to one person, we must take this to mean Christ, who became both our King and Priest to eternity, as Scripture has it.<sup>67</sup>

200 In his German Bible translation Luther rendered the title "THE BRANCH" by the Hebrew "Zemach," which, as has previously been seen from Isaiah and Jeremiah, is a technical term for the Messiah in certain Messianic passages.

Zechariah 9:9: "The Prophecy of Palm Sunday"

201 Zechariah 9:9 reads, when literally rendered: "Exult greatly, daughter of Zion, shout in triumph, daughter of Jerusalem, behold, thy King comes to thee, just and endowed with salvation is He, lowly, and riding upon a colt, the foal of she asses." This is cited by a number of the evangelists as a prophecy of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

202 Luther summarized the contents of chapters 9-10 of Zechariah like this:

In the ninth, he goes on to the time to come, and prophesies first, in chapter x, of how Alexander the Great shall win Tyre and Sidon and Philistia, so that the whole world shall be opened to the coming Gospel of Christ, and he leads King Christ into Jerusalem on an ass.<sup>68</sup>

203 Luther claims that in Zechariah "Zion" and "Jerusalem" are synonymous designations for the Church of the New Testament. As the "daughter" of a city is an expression frequently employed to refer to its inhabitants collectively in the Old Testament, so in 9:9 the city of Jerusalem refers to the believers. In view of the fact that

Matthew 21:4-5 and John 12:14-15 quoted this verse as a prophecy of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, it cannot be questioned that Jesus Christ is spoken of in Zechariah 9:9 as the King who will ride into Jerusalem. Those who are going to triumph in Christ must be the New Testament believers. Not the proud city of Jerusalem over which Jesus wept on the first Palm Sunday is meant in this verse, but the believers who look upon Jesus as their Savior are the "Zion" and "Jerusalem" of whom Zechariah spoke about 480 B.C.

Zechariah 11:12-13: "The Selling of the Messiah for Thirty Pieces of Silver"

204 As a theologian and exegete who utilized the basic hermeneutical principle that Scripture interprets Scripture, Luther logically understood Zechariah 11:12-13 as interpreted by the New Testament as a prediction of the historical happening according to which Judas agreed to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, the price normally paid for a slave.<sup>69</sup>

205 In his Preface to Zechariah, the Reformer summarized chapter 11 as follows:

In the eleventh, however, he prophesies that Christ shall be sold by the Jews for thirty pieces of silver, for which cause He will leave them, so that Jerusalem will finally be destroyed and the Jews hardened in their error and dispersed, and thus the Gospel and the Kingdom of Christ come to the Gentiles, after the sufferings of Christ, in which He, as the shepherd, shall be smitten and the apostles, as the sheep, be scattered. For He must first suffer and thus enter into His glory.<sup>70</sup>



206 Luther in his Lectures on Zechariah considered chapter 11 as speaking about Christ. Zechariah 11:12-13, averred Luther, occurs in a symbolical section in which the prophet is shown as the shepherd of the people and the representative of the Lord. The prophet has two staves, the one called Beauty and the other called Bands. Although the prophet represents Yahweh, the people will have nothing to do with him. Thereby they also show their attitude toward Him who sent the Good Shepherd and put Him aside with maltreatment and humiliation. In the person of the prophet Zechariah the Messiah Himself is speaking, addressing Himself to the entire flock. If the people felt that this was the right thing to do, they would give Him the wages worthy of a slave according to Exodus 21:32.<sup>71</sup> Those acquainted with the New Testament will recognize this prophecy in 11:12-13, as a foreshadowing of the transaction by means of which Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, Matthew 26:15. The words of verse 13 are quoted in Matthew 26:15.<sup>72</sup>

#### The Messianic Prophecies of Malachi

207 Malachi is the last of the Old Testament prophets. His book is the last of the Minor Prophets in our European versions. Malachi was probably a younger contemporary of Nehemiah and may have witnessed the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in 444 B.C.

208 In his Preface to the Prophet Malachi (1532) Luther stated about Malachi that "he is a fine prophet, and his book contains beautiful sayings about Christ, which he calls 'a pure offering in all the world'; for by the Gospel God's grace is praised, and that is the true, pure thankoffering."<sup>73</sup>

Malachi 3:1-6

"The Prophecy of the Messenger of the Covenant"

209 Malachi 3:1 has been rendered by Luther in his German Bible as follows: "Seihe, Ich will meinen Engel senden, der vor mir her den Weg bereiten soll. Und bald wird kommen zu seinem Tempel derr Herr, den ihr sucht, und der Engel des Bundes des ihr begehret. Siehe, er kommt, spricht der Herr Zebaoth." Both the coming of John the Baptist and the coming of the Messiah are foretold in this passage. The Messiah is designated as "the Angel of the Covenant." This is the last reference to this uncreated Angel, mentioned a number of times in earlier canonical Old Testament, a text to be read and preached on for the festival of the purification of the Virgin Mary.

210 In announcing Christ's coming Malachi declared the Messiah would suddenly come to His temple. The Temple to which the Angel of the Covenant would come would not be the one built with hands on Mt. Moriah, but the spiritual Temple of His Church.<sup>74</sup> Addressing Himself specifically to those who were truly His covenant people, though a minority of the nation, the LORD declares that it was He whom the believers desired, whom they longed for, as repeatedly stated in the Old Testament, for instance, in Genesis 48:18; Psalm 119:166; Isaiah 25:9 and 64:1.

211 Malachi 3:2 has a prediction about the Messiah: "But when He comes who can bear it? When He shows Himself, who can stand? He is like a refiner's fire, like a cleaner's soap." These questions are rhetorical questions which require a negative answer. No one will be able to stand before the Messiah, unless he is ready to repent. Messiah's appearance will usher in the great Day, one of grace and mercy in its opening, but one

which also brings judgment in its consummation. This truth was declared by Simeon on the day of Christ's presentation, when aged Simeon referred to the Christ child as the rising and falling of many in Israel. During His public ministry Jesus taught the same truth. Belief in Him would save, but unbelief would result in everlasting condemnation (John 3:17, 19).

212 Verse 3 of Malachi 3 carries forward the same thought. The Messiah will sit down like one who refines and cleanses silver to cleanse Levi's descendants and purify them into gold or silver. Then they will in a righteous way bring an offering to the Lord. This verse speaks of the purification of His children. This divine activity in the Old Testament was accomplished by the priesthood, but since all members in the New Testament are priests (1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10) the Lord's manner of dealing with His elect is to purge away their dross and refine their gold. The Lord frequently uses stern measures to effect His purposes, so that those who believe in Christ will be clean in Him and present their offerings in righteousness.

Malachi 4:2: "The Messianic Prophecy  
of the Sun of Righteousness"

213 Luther wrote in his Lectures on Malachi that the fourth chapter refers to Christ.<sup>75</sup> The day whose coming is spoken of in chapter 4:1 is understood by Luther to be "the day of Christ's Kingdom." The judgment that is depicted occurs during the New Testament age when either belief or unbelief will be determinative of the destinies of men and women, culminating ultimately in the Great Day of Judgment.

214 The Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in its wings, Luther averred, was a prophecy of the coming of Christ and the preaching of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins through which people are healed from their sins and through which escape from eternal death is made possible.

Malachi 4:3-4: The Prophecy of the Coming of John the Baptist

215 The last verse of Malachi speaks about the waypreparer for the Messiah. The last words in the Old Testament in our European Bibles read: "I am going to send you the prophet Elijah before the LORD'S great and terrible day comes. He will give the heart of the fathers to their children and the heart of the children to their fathers. Otherwise I will have to come and destroy the whole country with a curse." (Beck) On the strength of the New Testament the Wittenberg Reformer wrote: "Again, he prophesies of the coming of John the Baptist, as Christ Himself points out, in Matthew xi, calling John His angel and the Elijah, of whom Malachi writes."<sup>76</sup>

- 216 A Summary of Luther's Old Testament Christological Teachings: (Arranged according to the loci of systematic theology)

I. Person of Christ

A. Christ's Deity

1. 2 Samuel 7:12-17; 2 Samuel 23:5-6; Psalm 2:7; (Hebrews 1:7; Psalm 8:4; Psalm 45:6; Proverbs 8:22-23; Psalm 102:26,27; Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:2; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:15.
2. Christ's Eternal generation from the Father: Psalm 2:7; (Hebrews 1:5; 5:5).
3. Christ as Creator: Proverbs 8:30; Genesis 1:3,6,9,13,14,20,24,26.

B. Christ's Humanity

1. Genesis 3:15; Genesis 12:3; 49:10; Numbers 24:18; Deuteronomy 18:15; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6.
2. The Personal Union: Proverbs 8:12, 22,31; Isaiah 7:14 (God-with-us).  
Communication of Nature: Jeremiah 23:5-6; Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 110:1.  
Genus Idiomaticum: Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:16.  
Genus Apotelesmaticum: Genesis 3:15; 22:18.  
Genus Majestaticum: Psalm 45:2,7.

## II. The States of Christ

### A. State of Humiliation

1. Virgin birth: Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:3; Genesis 3:15.
2. Birth of Christ: Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6.
3. Suffering of Christ: Psalm 40:13; Psalm 69:2-4; Isaiah 53:8.
4. Redemptive work of Christ: Job 19:25; Isaiah 49:7; Isaiah 53:1-12; Isaiah 59:20; Hosea 13:14.
5. Death of Christ: Isaiah 53:12; 53:8-9; Daniel 9:26.
6. Burial of Christ: Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:10.

### B. State of Exaltation

Psalm 2:8; Psalm 8:5f; Psalm 110:1;  
72:8,9,11,17.

1. Resurrection of Christ: Isaiah 53:10; 16:10; Psalm 22:22.
2. Ascension of Christ: Psalm 47:5.
3. Session at the Right Hand of God: Psalm 110:1; Psalm 45:7-8.

### III. The Threefold Office of Christ

#### A. The Sacerdotal or Priestly Office

1. High priestly nature and everlasting nature: Psalm 110:4.
2. Suffered as Man's substitute: Isaiah 53:4-7.
3. Punished for man's sin: Isaiah 53:5-6-
4. Suffered death because of man's sin: Isaiah 53:12.
5. Christ removed and redeemed men from penalty of Law: Isaiah 53:5.
6. Christ's suffering vicarious: Isaiah 53:4-6; Job 19:25; Isaiah 41:14; Hosea 13:14; Psalm 49:7f.

#### B. Prophetic Office

1. The following passages in the Old Testament announce this office; Deuteronomy 18:18; Isaiah 42:1-7; Isaiah 50:4-10; 55:4f; 61:1f; 63:1f; 63:1; Zechariah 6:12; Ezekeial 34:23.
2. Christ as prophet of the world: Isaiah 49:6; 60-3; Haggai 2:7.

#### C. The Kingly Office

1. The following passages set forth the kingly office: Genesis 49:10; Psalm 2:6; Psalm 54:1; Psalm 110:1f; Psalm 72:1; Psalm 110:1f; Isaiah 9:6f; Jeremiah 23:5f; 33:15; Daniel 7:10; Daniel 9:25; Zechariah 9:9.
2. Kingdom of power: Psalm 8:6,7; Daniel 7:14,27; Psalm 110:1.
3. Kingdom of grace: Jeremiah 23:5; Zechariah 9:9; Isaiah 40:11.
4. Kingdom of glory: Isaiah 9:7.

S U P P L E

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R E F O R M A T I O N



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LECTURES



## NOTES

### LECTURE I

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## NOTES

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28. WA 42, pp. 447-448; LW Am Ed 2, pp. 260-261.
29. LW Am Ed 3, p. 61, 232; Vol. 4, p. 128.
30. WA 44, p. 806; St L 2, p. 2057.
31. WA 44, p. 772; St L 2, p. 2000f.
32. WA 44, p. 766f; St L 2, p. 1989f.
33. WA 54, p. 67; St L 3, p. 1931
34. WA 20, p. 362; St L 3, p. 753.
35. WA 25, p. 93; St L 6, p. 20.

36. WA, Tischreden 5, No. 5841.
37. St L 12, p. 403; Cf. also St L 7, p. 2051.
38. WA 14, p. 757; LW Am Ed 9, p. 176.
39. WA 14, pp. 669-682; LW Am Ed 9, pp. 182-184.
40. WA 14, p. 677; LW Am Ed 9, p. 178.
41. Norman Habel, "Deuteronomy 18--God's Chosen People," Concordia Theological Monthly, 35:575-582, October, 1964.
42. WA 14, pp. 679-680; LW Am Ed 9, pp. 182-183.
43. WA 14, pp. 680-681; LW Am Ed 9, p. 183.
44. P. E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary. The Old Testament (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1923), I, p. 370.
45. WA 57-3, pp. 104-105; LW Am Ed 29, pp. 114-115.
46. WA 57-3, p. 104; LW Am Ed 29, pp. 114-115.
47. WA 54, pp. 43-44; LW Am Ed 15, p. 286.
48. WA 54, pp. 44-45; LW Am Ed 15, pp. 286-287.
49. LW Am Ed 25, pp. 267-352.
50. Plass, What Luther Says, op. cit., III, p. 1621.
51. Cf. S. Mowinckel, He That Cometh. Translated by G. B. Anderson (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), pp. 63-75.
52. WA 54, pp. 94-96; LW Am Ed 15, pp. 346-347.
53. Cf. Luther's translation in his German Bible.

54. WA re, pp. 99-100; LW Am Ed 15, pp. 351-362.
55. LW Am Ed 14, p. ix.
56. Cf. Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther and the Old Testament. Translated by Eric and C. Gritsch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 272-276.
57. Plass, op. cit., III, p. 1590.
58. Works of Martin Luther. (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman and Castle Press, 1932), Vi, p. 385. Hereafter cited as LW Phil Ed.
59. LW Am Ed 12, pp. 5, 33, 55, 62.
60. Artur Weiser, The Psalms. A Commentary. Translated by Herbert Hartwell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 140ff.
61. LW Am Ed 12, p. 98.
62. WA 3, pp. 106-107; LW Am Ed 10, pp. 104-112; and 31, pp. 416-522.
63. WA 31, pp. 522-523.
64. For Psalm 22, cf. WA 5, p. 598; For Psalm 40, cf. St L 4, p. 156; for Psalm 69, cf. LW Am Ed 12, p. 351.
65. St L 4, p. 156.
66. WA 48, p. 443; St L p, p. 1175.
67. LW Am Ed 12, pp. 230-231.
69. LW Am Ed 10, p. 351.
70. WA 4, p. 47; LW Am Ed 11, p. 189.
71. WA 19, p. 595; LW Am Ed 14, p. 257.
72. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary. Old Testament, op. cit., II, p. 175.
73. LW Am Ed 13, p. 228.                      74. Ibid.



NOTES  
LECTURE III

1. N. Martin Luthers Saemmtliche Werke. 23 vols, ed. Johann G. Walch in modern German (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1890-1910), 23, p. 1415. Hereafter cited as St. L.
2. Formula of Concord Epitome, The Book of Concord (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 467, line 10.
3. St L 22, p. 1770.
4. Cf. Luther's Explanation, "Preface to the Books of Colomon," Works of Martin Luther (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company and Castle Press, 1923), VI, p. 191. Hereafter cited as Phil Ed. Cf. also Luther's Works. Notes on Ecclesiastes. Lectures on the Song of Solomon (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), 15, pp. 191-195. Hereafter cited as LW Am Ed.
5. Carl M. Zorn, Jesusmine. Das Hohelied Ausgelegt (Zwickau (Sachsen): Verlag des Schriftenvereins (C. Klaerner), no date), 132 pp.; "Summarische Auslegung des Hoheliedes," translated by Paul W. Ludwig in Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, 62:48-68; 206-216; January, April, and July 1965.  
  
P. E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary. Old Testament (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924), II, p. 277.
6. LW Am Ed 1, p. 20; LW Am Ed 7, p. 109.

7. The Revised Standard Version (New York: The Department of Christian Education in the National Council of Churches, 1959), p. 609. The New English Bible (New York: The American Bible Society, 1976), p. 701.
8. Luther followed the practice of translating the superscriptions of the Psalms wherever found, because in the Massoretic text they are the first verse of the Psalm.
9. LW Phil Ed VI, p. 395.
10. LW Am Ed 19, p. 36.
11. LW Phil Ed VI, p. 424.
12. LW Am Ed 18, pp. 16-19; WA 13, p. 15.
13. Ibid., pp. 71-72; WA 13, p. 63.
14. Ibid., p. 74; WA 13, p. 64.
15. LW Phil Ed VI, p. 426.
16. LW Am Ed 18, pp. 188-189; WA 13, p. 204.
17. LW Phil Ed VI, pp. 425f.
18. Ibid., p. 430.
19. Ibid., p. 430.
20. James Luther Mays, Micah. A Commentary (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), pp. 114-115.
21. LW Am Ed 18, pp. 247-248; WA 13, pp. 324-326.
22. LW Phil Ed, VI, p. 430.

23. This is apparent from reading the Reformer's Lectures on Isaiah, published for the first time in WA 31-2, pp. 1-260, and 261-585. Cf. LW Am Ed 16, p. 5; and vol. 17, chapters 40-66. There is no hint that Isaiah was not the author of chapters 40-66. Cf. Edward J. Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), p. 206.
24. LW Am Ed 16, p. 28; WA 21-2, pp. 19-20.
25. Ibid., pp. 28-30; WA 31-2, pp. 20-21.
26. LW Am Ed 18, p. 238; WA 13, p. 319.
27. LW Phil Ed, VI, p. 405.
28. LW Am Ed 16, p. 51; WA 31-2, pp. 35-36.
29. LW Phil Ed VI, p. 405.
30. Otto Kaiser, Isaiah 1-12. A Commentary (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), pp. 96-102.
31. St L 20, p. 2095.
32. LW Am Ed 16, p. 84; WA 31-2, p. 59.
33. Ibid., p. 101; WA 31-2, p. 71
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., p. 117; WA 31-2, p. 83.
36. Ibid., p. 196; WA 31-2, pp. 139-140.
37. Ibid., p. 186; WA 32-2, p. 131.

38. Ibid., p. 273; WA 31-2, p. 199.
39. Ibid., p. 299; WA 30-2, p. 220.
40. Ibid., p. 306; WA 31-2, p. 226.
41. LW Am Ed, 17, pp. 3-9; WA 31-2, pp. 261-267.
42. Claus Westermann, Das Buch Jesaja. Kapitel 40-66. (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), pp. 153-168; 209-217; Hertmut Guenther, Gottes Knecht und Gottes Reich. Oberursler Hefte, No. 6 (Germany: Oberursel), 1972.
43. Luther considered the Servant of Yahweh Songs as predicting facts about Christ as prophet, priest, and king. Cf. LW Am Ed 17, pp. 60, 169, 193, 215; WA 31-2, pp. 207-308; 392-393, 428ff.
44. WA 10, I, p. 537; St L 12, p. 300.
45. W. Fitch, "Isaiah," The New Bible Commentary, edited by F. Davidson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), p. 604. Young, op. cit., p. 225.
46. LW Am Ed, 17, p. 329; WA 31-2, pp. 515ff.
47. WA 52, p. 339; St L 13a, p. 670f.
48. Artur Weiser, The Old Testament. Its Foundation and Development (New York: Association Press, 1961), p. 261.
49. WA 43, p. 537; St L 2, p. 320f; WA 54, p. 185f; St L 14, p. 446f.
50. LW Phil Ed, VI, p. 409.

51. WA 20, pp. 561-580.
52. St L 14, pp. 47ff.
53. LW Am Ed 29, p. 198; WA 57-3, p. 196.
54. LW Phil Ed, VI, p. 412.
55. Ibid., p. 412.
56. Ibid., p. 413.
57. Ibid., p. 415.
58. Ibid., p. 418.
59. Ibid., pp. 420-421.
60. Ibid., p. 421.
61. Ibid., p. 421
62. Ibid., p. 434.
63. Ibid., pp. 434-435.
64. Georg Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), 465-468.
65. LW Phil Ed, VI, p. 435.
66. Ibid., p. 435.
67. LW Am Ed 20, p. 69; WA 13, p. 608 (1526 Lectures).
68. LW Phil Ed, VI, pp. 435-436.

69. LW Am Ed 20, pp. 318-319. WA 23, pp. 539-640 (1526 Lectures).
70. LW Phil Ed, VI, p. 436.
71. LW Am Ed 20, p. 318; WA 23, p. 640.
72. In his lectures on Zechariah Luther takes up the matter of Matthew ascribing the giving of the 30 pieces of silver to Jeremiah when after all it is found here in Zechariah (LW Am Ed 20, 321; WA 23, p. 642). Luther wrote: "This question, to be sure, and others like it do not bother me greatly, because they do not serve any great purpose. Matthew does quite enough when he quotes certain Scripture passages even though he may not hit upon the exactly correct name, especially, since in other places he quotes passages without using the words exactly as they are in Scripture" (p. WA 23, p. 642).
73. LW Phil Ed, VI, p. 436.
74. LW Am Ed 18, p. 409; WA 13, p. 693.
75. Ibid., 18, p. 417; WA 13, p. 700.
76. LW Phil Ed, VI, p. 436.

## REACTIONS TO THE REFORMATION LECTURES

John Brus

I would like to begin by commending Dr. Surburg and those who planned the lectures for the importance and timeliness of the topic. Since I teach Old Testament, I benefited simply from the reminder to make greater use of Luther's writings on the Old Testament in my preparation and study. A simple positive presentation of Luther's insights on the Old Testament in general and on Messianic prophecy in particular would be valuable at any time.

However, the topic has taken on special importance because of the gulf which separates Luther's general approach to the Old Testament and his interpretation of specific Messianic passages of the Old Testament from the approach of many modern interpreters, including many who bear the name Lutheran. It is especially urgent that we point out this discrepancy, since many of those who are casting aside Luther's interpretation of the Christological passages of the Old Testament, nevertheless, are misquoting Luther to make it appear that he was an adherent of their own rejection of verbal inspiration. I appreciated the lecturer's emphasis on the vital hermeneutical issue which is involved here and his warning against the present tendency to sever the Old Testament from the New.

While I very much appreciated the contrast between Luther's interpretation and that of the adherents of higher criticism, I would have welcomed more of a discussion of the opposite danger also. At times some conservative Lutherans may be so tied to Luther's interpretation of a specific passage that they imply that any other interpretation is

somehow un-Lutheran. I do not think Dr. Surburg has done this in his presentation, since at a number of points he has indicated a difference of interpretation between Luther and some later commentators, such as Kretzmann. Nevertheless, I would have appreciated a more specific discussion of the danger of conservative Lutherans becoming too tied to Luther's interpretation of a specific passage.

Luther's interpretation of Genesis 4:1 is a case in point. I recall a letter and the editor's response in a recent issue of Christian News which seemed to imply that Beck's translation is more Lutheran and therefore more suitable for Lutheran use than the NIV, because Beck follows Luther's translation, but the NIV does not. Dr. Surburg gives somewhat of the same impression of page and of lecture two, where he says that Luther's translation, "I have gotten a man, the Lord," follows the Hebrew text, but translations like the RSV and the NIV which translate "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord" are not following the Hebrew text, but the Greek of the Septuagint. It would be more accurate to say that translations like the RSV and NIV are placing the same interpretation on the Hebrew text as the translators of the Septuagint did long ago. The Hebrew word "eth" can either mean "with" or it can be the sign of a definite object. The context must determine which is correct. It is not strictly accurate to say that the reference to Cain's birth in Genesis 4:1 contains the same grammatical construction as the reference to Abel's birth in the following verse. This is clear if we look at the translations of the two verses with the eths included. "Adam knew (eth) Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bare (eth) Cain, and said, I have gotten a man, (eth) the Lord.



Again she bore (eth) his brother, (eth) Abel. The definite objects, Eve, Cain, and his brother, are all marked by eth. Words in apposition to the definite objects, such as "his wife" or "Abel," may occur either with or without an eth. The object in the statement "I have gotten a man" appears without the eth, giving the impression that Eve is not necessarily thinking about the definite man foretold in Genesis 3:15. If "a man" is indefinite, we could conclude that the eth which follows it is not the sign of a definite object in apposition to "a man." It, therefore, must mean "with." A person, therefore, could contend that the construction in verse 1 is not an exact parallel to the next verse, in which eth occurs with both members of the phrase. He might, therefore, be led to reject Luther's translation on grammatical, rather than hermeneutical or textual grounds.

I am inclined to regard Luther's interpretation as correct, and I always point it out to the class when we cover this text, but it appears to me that Luther made his choice here more on the grounds of his deep feeling for finding Christ throughout the Old Testament, rather than on the grammatical necessities of the case or preference of the Hebrew text to the Septuagint. A translator who opts for the translation "with the help of the Lord" could well be motivated by the false assumption that nothing so Messianic as "the man," the Lord" could occur so early in the Old Testament. However, I believe that other Lutheran commentators, such as Leupold, who opt for the translation "with" are not motivated by such presuppositions, but merely feel that "with" is most likely on the basis of grammar. It appears that Luther himself was undecided on the grammatical point, for he translates "the man of the Lord"

in his commentary. In either case, the verse expressed Eve's faith, whether she believed this was the Messiah Himself or a child who was the first step toward the coming of the Seed.

A similar situation exists in the interpretation of Genesis 3:15. Anyone who accepts the Old Testament authoritatively must agree that the Seed who crushes the head of Satan and the Seed through whom all nations are blessed must be singular, namely Christ. However, even such sound Messianic commentators as Hengstenberg see the seed in the phrase "enmity between your seed and her seed" as plural on the grounds that the seed of Satan is plural. The enmity rages throughout the whole Old Testament--Cain against Abel, Ishmael against Isaac, Esau against Jacob, Athaliah against the seed of David. Then the Seed Himself, the Messiah, comes and delivers the victory. A wider and narrower use of the term "seed" here may be similar to the use of the term "servant" in Isaiah. It refers to the nation Israel in some passages, but the Servant who fulfills the mission of Israel is one, namely the Christ. The Messiah Himself can then be called Israel, since it is he that fulfills Israel's mission to be a light to the nations. (Is. 42:19; 44:1; 21; 49:3) Perhaps God here chose "zera," a word which can be both singular and plural, to show the participation both of the Messiah and his brothers in this battle against the seed of Satan, though it is of course the Messiah Himself who gains the victory for his brothers. In fact, though Christ has won the victory, this battle still continues. (Rev. 12:17; Rom. 16:20) Both Beck and the NIV switch from a plural to a singular translation of "seed" in Genesis 22:17-18. Some Lutheran commentators see the same progression in Genesis 3:15.

These two passages illustrate the difference that exists between sound Lutheran commentators

on the interpretation of some of the details of specific passages. We should be careful about labeling certain interpretations as the Lutheran interpretation, because people sometimes suspect any translation or interpreter who differs from that translation of being "un-Lutheran." We should take care to distinguish between those who disagree with Luther because they wish to deny the reality of direct Messianic prophecy and those who disagree with his interpretation of a specific passage on exegetical grounds.

I would like to have seen more discussion of the possibility that some Messianic prophecies refer both to a typical figure in the Old Testament and to the Messiah. Is the passage about the prophet in Deut. 18 a reference only to Christ, or is a reference to the Old Testament prophets included, especially in verses 20-22? Are the references in the Psalms to betrayal by a friend limited to Judas, or are references to Ahithophel included in Psalms 41 and 109? Does the prophecy of David's son in II Samuel 7 include a reference to Solomon in verse 14, or does it refer exclusively to Christ? Hosea 11:1 is a prophecy which refers to Christ's return from Egypt, but it seems to include a typical reference to the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. How much room for difference of opinion is permissible concerning these and similar passages? Would a typical interpretation of Psalm 22 or even Isaiah 7 be a permissible exegetical difference as long as the Messianic interpretation was upheld? Questions of this nature could have been dealt with more specifically in the lectures.

Dr. Surburg refers both to types and rectilinear prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament and properly warns against the discarding of rectilinear prophecy by many modern interpreters. I would have appreciated more discussion of the

possibility of prophecies which fall between these two categories and which refer both to a type and to Christ. Luther appears to follow such an interpretation of the words of Zechariah concerning Joshua.

Dr. Surburg explained that he did not want to go too far afield into passages which would take us into other loci of systematic theology besides the person and work of Christ. However, I would have welcomed a little more discussion of Old Testament passages concerning the Messiah's kingdom. This seems especially important in view of the popularity of millennialism today. Sometimes Lutheran interpreters have had difficulty deciding if some of the kingdom passages of the Old Testament are basically figurative descriptions of the New Testament era, or if some of them are more literal references to the new heavens and the new earth. Perhaps Luther's eschatology would be an appropriate topic for a future set of lectures.

I appreciated both the historical, chronological approach which Dr. Surburg developed in the main body of his lectures as well as the systematic summary of the passages at the conclusion, since it enables one to study the passages from both points of view.

In conclusion, I appreciated Prof. Surburg's basic approach and his general conclusions. I have a very positive reaction to his lectures. The questions which are raised in this formal reaction, as well as questions about the interpretation of other specific passages which were raised during the discussion period of each lecture, have been exegetical questions about the interpretation of the details of specific passages, rather than differences of opinion about the reality of direct Messianic prophecy.

## CONCLUDING STATEMENT AS A REACTOR

Rudolph E. Honsey

We surely owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Surburg for sharing with us the fruits of many years of careful research and devoted study from which he drew for this assignment. That includes much more than the hours of work that he put into this particular series of lectures, although that input must also have been considerable. He has done us a real service by turning our thoughts back to Dr. Martin Luther's interpretation of certain Old Testament passages. For it is Dr. Luther's interpretation that Dr. Surburg is presenting rather than his own, although we dare say that in most instances they coincide. From these lectures, from a previous lecture here at Bethany, from his voluminous writings, and from personal conversations with Dr. Surburg, it is evident that Dr. Surburg accepts and upholds the Messianic interpretation of Old Testament passages that have been under consideration these two days. Throughout these lectures this reactor finds himself in substantial agreement with the essayist.

Dr. Surburg introduced the first three paragraphs with the words "Back to Luther!" That is truly a battle cry that we ought to heed as we are now about to mark the forthcoming 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth a little more than a year from today. "Back to Luther!" ought to be the motto of all who would be Lutheran in fact and not merely in name. Unfortunately, many who parade under the banner of Lutheranism today do not share Luther's conviction that the Bible is the inerrant, infallible and powerful Word of God, but instead regard it as a merely human book

and subject it to the exercise of the historical critical method, as our lecturer states in paragraph 9 of his first lecture.

"Back to Luther!" is also what we have attempted to do almost every year since 1965 in our annual Reformation Lectures here at Bethany. It is most gratifying to see people returning every year to attend, share in the lectures, and participate in the discussions. We can all learn and profit much from that great teacher and expounder of the Holy Scriptures, Dr. Martin Luther.

In these days when many church bodies are experiencing internal battles between factions that are most commonly designated as "liberals" and "conservatives," it is important that we Lutherans avoid being attracted to the so-called "conservative" or "evangelical" branches of the Reformed Protestants and so lose our Lutheran heritage. We may be so much attracted to them by their staunch position over against the liberals in their body, including their stand on the inerrancy of Scripture, that we tend to overlook the essential differences between Lutheran and Reformed theology, including the Reformed view of the means of grace. Luther regarded the Word and the Sacraments as powerful, not only promising faith but bestowing it. Such a view was foreign to the thinking of Zwingli and Calvin. As Lutherans, we must with Martin Luther emphasize the power, the efficacy of the means of grace.

Another distinct difference between Luther and Calvin was pointed out by the essayist in his first lecture, paragraph 13. This difference lay in their views on Messianic prophecy. Although John Calvin was an erudite scholar and in many respects a very capable interpreter who wrote

voluminously on the Old Testament, he appears to have been reluctant to accept the Messianic interpretation in many passages of the Old Testament that Luther understood as prophesying Jesus Christ. On the other hand, as our essayist states in paragraph 16, "Luther consistently discovered Christ in the Old Testament Bible."

Luther's insistence on a study and mastery of the languages of the Bible was one of his great contributions. While it is well known that Luther more than any other individual influenced and placed his stamp on the German language into which he translated the Bible, it is equally important that he translated the Bible, not from the Latin Vulgate, itself a translation, but from the original Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the original Greek of the New Testament. He was thereby also able to use independent judgment and condemn mistranslations, such as that in Genesis 3:15, referred to in paragraph 24.

Since Luther had a high regard for the Messianic interpretation, it may strike us somewhat strangely that he did not identify the Angel (Messenger) of the LORD with the Second Person of the Trinity in certain passages, for example, in Genesis 18 and Genesis 22. The essayist himself expressed the opinion that such an identification might well be made.

The last two lectures concern themselves with rectilinear Messianic prophecies. In general, Luther's treatment of those passages from Genesis 3:15 through Malachi 4:3,4 is very good, because it is Christocentric. Our lecturer very commendably lets Luther speak for himself, and finds himself substantially in agreement with Luther, as does also this reactor.

Luther obviously uses the grammatical-historical method, basing his exegesis of a passage on the grammar and historical situation. While one might question certain specific derivations, such as the rather unusual one that Luther gives for the expression "Shiloh" in Genesis 49:10 (cf. LUTHER'S WORKS, American Edition, Vol. 8, pp. 241-243), he generally arrives at the right conclusions. And while Luther is at times given to digressing, his digressions are seldom tedious, but rather delightfully entertaining.

Dr. Surburg's account of Luther's interpretation of 2 Samuel 7:13,19 is very clear and helpful. In our opinion that is the best translation of that passage, and one that retains the continuity of the Messianic train of thought. Of our existing English translations, Beck's An American Translation is closest to Luther's translation, but Luther's, as translated by our essayist, is preferable.

This reactor has no comments about the paragraphs on the Messiah in the Psalms, paragraphs 120-137, except to state that he is in agreement with Dr. Luther's interpretation as presented by Dr. Surburg in the last part of his second lecture. It is unfortunate that many interpreters, among them even conservative Lutherans, are hesitant or even reluctant to interpret certain psalms, for example Psalm 8 and Psalm 40, as being directly Messianic, even though they are expressly quoted and referred to the Messiah in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The essayist places the Book of Job into the Solomonic period. Although the authorship of the book cannot be determined with certainty, nor can the date of its composition, the Solomonic authorship of the Book of Job is perhaps as good a



conjecture as any. The passage referred to in Job is the well-known Resurrection passage, Job 19:25-27, treated in paragraph 139 in the third lecture. Of that passage, Luther's translation is preferable to most available translations. The most satisfactory English translation of that passage to date is the one in Beck's An American Translation, which will be further improved in the forthcoming new edition. Luther's and Beck's translations correctly render the first verb in verse 26 with the word "surround" rather than the word "destroy," which is found in most translations. A literal translation of Luther's German Bible in this passage reads as follows: "But I know that my Redeemer lives, and He will awaken me down here out from the earth. And I shall afterwards be surrounded with this my skin, and shall in my flesh see God. That same One I shall see for myself, and my eyes will behold Him, and no stranger" (that is, I and no stranger, I and not another shall see Him). Luther correctly refers the word "stranger" or "another" to the speaker Job rather than to God, as many translations suggest. It is regrettable that most other translations do not follow the lead of Luther on this important passage.

Another passage which Luther correctly viewed as Messianic is often overlooked by even the most Christologically oriented Bible scholars: Proverbs 8:22-31, the Wisdom passage, referred to in paragraphs 141 and 142. This reactor agrees with both Luther and the essayist that this passage speaks of the uncreated Personal Wisdom, the Word of God Incarnate and Wisdom from on High, the Son of God. This passage, like Psalm 2, speaks unmistakably of the eternal generation of God and the Son by God the Father, and His activity as a member of the Holy Trinity in the creation of the world,

and is an Old Testament parallel to the Logos or Word passage at the beginning of the Gospel according to St. John, as Dr. Surburg mentions in paragraphs 141 and 142.

The passage containing the prophecy of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, Micah 5:2, speaks of the eternity of Jesus, as Luther rightly states. Unfortunately, the passage has been deprived of that meaning and essentially destroyed in the Revised Standard Version, the New English Bible, and the Good News Bible.

Probably on account of the length of the presentation, the passages from Isaiah and certain other books were treated rather briefly, more briefly than some of us might have desired. We might apply that to passages such as Isaiah 25:3, Psalm 16, Psalm 22, and Psalm 40. It was no doubt necessary to limit the treatment of those and other passages in order to keep the length of the lectures within the time allotted to them.

It was surely refreshing to learn more about Luther's interpretation of these Messianic passages from the Old Testament. In the vast majority of cases Luther was right on target in his interpretation of these passages.

As we close our remarks, we are reminded of the Greeks who approached the disciple Philip. They came with a simple request: "We would see Jesus." (John 12:21). That request was granted, and they did see Him. In these three lectures, Dr. Surburg has uncovered for us some tremendous treasures from the storehouse of Dr. Luther's writings on Messianic passages in the Old Testament. When he came, we might well have requested with those Greeks: "We would see Jesus." And we were

not disappointed. In these passages from the Old Testament we too have seen Jesus. For that we are grateful to Dr. Surburg and Dr. Luther, but above all, to God himself, who has enabled them and us to see Jesus more clearly and fully in those very Scriptures of which our Savior Himself expressly stated: "They testify of me." (John 5:39)