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# ZION NEWS

A newsletter of Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia – May/June, 2011

“Come let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God.” Jeremiah 51:10

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## A Relevant Church

Pastor Nathanael Mayhew

**Question:** What makes a church have significant bearing or impact on people? **Answer:** How it deals with the problem of sin.

The answer to the problem of sin can only come from the Word of God. Any other solution to that problem will fail. The Psalmist declared: **“This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life” (Psalm 119:50).**

Because it reveals God’s plan of salvation for us, the Word of God is always relevant. **“The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the LORD endures forever” (1 Peter 1:24-25).**

God has given His Word to lead all people to the knowledge of **“the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).** The truth of God’s Word is not relative, dependant upon when and where we live.

God’s Word does not change with the whims, ideas or scientific discoveries of this life. God’s desire is for us to faithfully proclaim His Word, as it is, and in its entirety. Through the prophet Jeremiah the LORD said, **“he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully” (Jeremiah 23:28);** Paul told Timothy, **“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Timothy 4:16).** To remain relevant, we must continue to teach God’s Word in its truth and purity.

Before His ascension Jesus told His disciples: **“Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:46-48).**

The words “repentance” and “remission of sins” remind us

of the two-fold message of the church: Law and Gospel. Sin and Grace. These two work together. **“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).**



The Law demonstrates the direness of our predicament. It reveals the problem of sin and our need for forgiveness in Christ.

Then the Gospel comes to the rescue with the assurance of salvation in the work of Jesus, the Christ. Both are necessary. A relevant church is one that proclaims both Sin and Grace; Law and Gospel.

God grant us the strength to proclaim His Word in its truth and purity by means of the Law and Gospel, so that we remain a truly relevant church. †

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# When the Truth is a Lie

from the Messiah Messenger

How do you explain the greatness of the Man whose birthday we celebrate on Christmas?

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself...

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth - His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

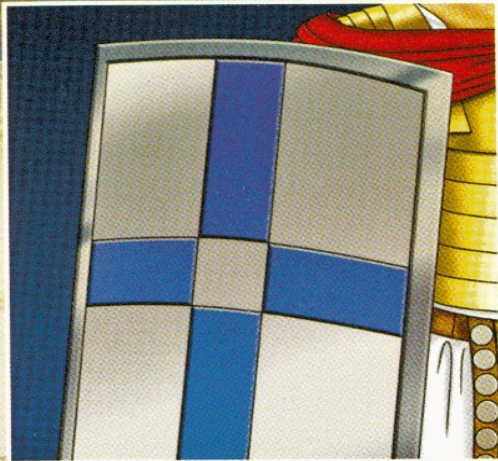
Have you read or heard this before? It is hard to find any untruth in the article, but taken as a whole it is a lie. Reread the article. Can you find an untruth? Did you spot what was missing?

There is a hint in the first line. "The greatness of the Man." A red flag comes up with the phrase "leader of the column of progress." Who is being described? It's like there is a list of influential people and Jesus is at the top of the list. It's like the life of Jesus is to be an inspiration to all of us to teach us something to the effect that just one life can be significant and important.

What's missing? It's true that Jesus was dead and was buried in a borrowed grave. What's missing is that Jesus rose from the dead, no minor detail! Jesus is a Man, but what's missing is that Jesus is also God! When it comes to making a list about human influences in history, Jesus is not just at the top with someone (Lincoln, Edison, Einstein or....) a distant second. Jesus is the only name on the list. No one else was born without sin. No one else was both true Man and true God. No one else died for the sins of the world. No one else raised Himself from the dead.

The author of the article is "Unknown." Yet its ultimate source is easy to recognize. Some poor human being was a mere pawn in the hand of the father of lies, the devil, who loves to author such poison pen letters that sound so noble and are filled with good words but deceive many. The whole truth:

***"And therefore 'it was accounted to him for righteousness.' Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification." – Romans 4:22-25 †***



## The Shield of Faith

*In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. —Ephesians 6:16*

Made from goat-skin or calf skin stretched over sturdy pieces of wood, the Roman shield stood four feet long and was three-feet wide. Iron rims were fitted along the top and bottom edges, and an iron circle was attached to the center of the shield. The boards curved inward and a leather strap was fastened to the shield's back.

Before going into battle, Roman soldiers drenched their leather-covered shields with water. When the fiery arrows of their enemies struck these soaked shields, the flames were immediately extinguished.<sup>4</sup> Soldiers could put their shields together and have more protection.

The shield of faith is the Christian's protection against temptation. Whenever we trust that God will provide everything we need, "the spiritual forces of evil" cannot tempt us with the lie that sin can provide a better life than God will. Ephesians 6:12

In this way, "all the flaming arrows of the evil one"—every temptation and distraction that Satan may hurl at God's people—can be stopped. Ephesians 6:16

When faced with authentic faith in God, the powers of darkness are overcome. That is why the apostle John could say, "This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.." 1 John 5:4



*As for God, his way is perfect, He is a shield for all who take refuge in him —2 Samuel 22:31*

*My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart. —Psalm 7:10*

*He has prepared his deadly weapons; he makes ready his flaming arrows. —Psalm 7:13*

*You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me. —Psalm 18:35*

Also Genesis 15:1; Psalm 3:3; 18:2; 28:7; 33:20; 46:9; 76:3

*thyreos*—shield or door

*scutum*—shield

# Vacation Bible School at Zion

by Pastor Nathanael Mayhew

Summer has arrived and we are preparing for another summer session of Vacation Bible School at Zion. Over the years, our summer VBS program has been one of our church's most successful outreach tools. Through the distribution of flyers and the opportunity to teach many young people about their Savior from sin, we have seen many visible results.

Almost every year parents approach teachers at the end of our week of VBS and comment on how different our VBS is from others they have attended. One parent commented positively saying: "I was amazed at how much Scripture my children learned this week!" What a privilege it is to be able to offer the "one thing needful" to these children!



## VBS Schedule

The TVBS flyer team will be coming to Lawrenceville on Monday night, July 4<sup>th</sup>. We have a team of only five people

coming this year. We will be adding some extra legs to the group with several of our own young people who have volunteered to help with flyer distribution. We will be distributing flyers July 5-7, and possibly the morning of July 8<sup>th</sup>. The TVBS team will be returning home on July 8-9.

Our VBS session begins on Monday July 18<sup>th</sup> and continues through Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Our sessions will begin at 9:00am and conclude at 11:30am every morning.



## You can Help!

There are many ways for you to help with VBS this summer. Here are a few examples:

- **Pray** - for the Lord's Word to work in the hearts of those who receive flyers, and in the children who attend VBS; for safe travels for the TVBS flyer team; for good weather for distributing flyers and for the week of our VBS; for other CLC churches and their VBS programs also....

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- **Invite** children in your family to attend our VBS. Take some VBS flyers and distribute them in your neighborhood or give them to people you know.
- **Serve** as a teacher or assistant for the week of VBS. We never have too many adults assisting! Help with teaching, crafts, music, snacks and/or recess!
- **Provide** housing for TVBS team members; provide a meal or snacks for the four days the flyer team is here.
- **Bring** drinks and snacks for the week of our VBS session for the children who attend.

The Ladies of Zion will be arranging the meals for the TVBS flyer team. If you would like to help with this please speak with Ann Duncan. If you would like to help with the week of VBS please speak to Pastor Mayhew. Thank you! †