

PREGNANT PROCLAMATION!

Gabriel L. Mancino

The Italian word for sandwich, "panino," can join the word, "gravido." "Gravido" means **pregnant**. On its own, "panino" is really a roll or bun, so an Italian "sandwich" is a **pregnant** roll or bun, i.e. **FILLED** with something (savoury).

Certain words or statements can be "**pregnant**" with meaning, i.e., full of meaning. Such was the case many times during Jesus' ministry. The Resurrection provided additional opportunities for **Pregnant Proclamation**.

For **Mary Magdalene**, it was ONE word of exclamation: "**Rabboni!**" which means "Master!" "**Doubting Thomas,**" expressed glad and reverent surprise and recognition in the words, "*My Lord and my God!*" Both were expressions of worship.

After Christ's crucifixion there was plenty of shock, sorrow and doubt flowing among His disciples. Thomas was not immune to the infection of unbelief, though he had earlier shown a genuine readiness to go into the hornet's nest of Christ's enemies and die with Him. So now, when reports of the Resurrection were coming in, Thomas firmly stated the terms on which he would now believe: "*Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe*" (John 20:25).

Let's not be too hard on Thomas. After all, we are thrilled with the true account of that poor lady that had a terrible physical condition for 12 years, but was healed upon coming to Jesus. She had said to herself, "*If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well*" (Matt. 9: 20-22. also 14: 34-36). **These people had faith—through their fingers.**

When Jesus came to Thomas, He offered Thomas the opportunity to do his



"lab test," using his finger and hand. Thomas *saw and heard*. That was enough. **Touching was unnecessary.** Jesus *faithfully and not unkindly*, had to tell Thomas (and us!) *'because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'*. (Jn. 20:29).

What Jesus said to Thomas, lovingly corrects and clarifies this matter. We could think that it would be far easier to believe in God or in Jesus if a person could see them. Other similar forms of reasoning also arise. Jesus says this is not correct. The front page article shows that even though Jesus was right there to be seen, heard and touched, yet most people rejected Him in one way or another.

At the Empty Tomb, Jesus told Mary to **stop clinging** to Him, for He was about to leave them and return to the Father. Christ loved His disciples— male and female—with a **holy love**. He loved all sinners, too. He even lovingly wept over doomed Jerusalem, the city that rejected Him, for within 40 years it would be totally destroyed, as He told them.

Jesus had already told His disciples of God's Great Promise of the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit cleansed and filled the 120 obediently-waiting disciples about ten days after Christ's Ascension. Jesus had given those spiritually-deficient, though "converted" disciples, a work to do **AFTER** they received that Promised Gift. Jesus was crucified on the Jewish Passover. The Holy Spirit came on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, which celebrates the "first-fruits" of the harvest. **What a harvest!**

The disciples received "The Promised Gift," (Acts 2), and poured out of that "upper room," and onto Jerusalem's streets with a **Pregnant Proclamation!** They were **FILLED** with Something savoury, alright! Basically, they were telling the citizens and visitors: "*Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!*" (Psalm 34:8). "**Pregnant?**" They were **FILLED** with God's Holy Spirit. **We need the Holy Ghost!**

Orthodox Good Friday (Crucifixion): May 3rd — Easter (Resurrection): May 5th Jesus repeatedly told His disciples that He would be betrayed, then killed, but would rise again. He told them the Old Testament (O.T.) basis for this truth. Paul, after his conversion, went everywhere preaching the Cross & Resurrection of Christ. Like Christ, he based his preaching fully on the O.T. Scriptures.

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The

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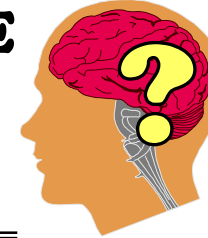
"Lift up a standard for the people." Isaiah 62:10

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"YOU'RE MAD!"

(Here's a good, full & informative read!)

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That's what they said to Jesus on more than one occasion. Some of His family arrived on the scene, maybe "to reason with Him" and take Him home— "out of sympathy," no doubt. They didn't realise *Who* He was, and *What* He was here to accomplish. So, what was the occasion *this time*?

Jesus had just told His opponents that they were trying to kill Him. Many today would call that "**paranoia**." However, text after text in the Bible— *including the final text that sees Him nailed to a Cross*— proves that He was correct. Though the Lord knew the murderous intentions of His chief enemies, He had no fear of them, at all.

Why should Jesus fear *man* or even fear *death*— our "*last enemy*"? (1 Cor. 15:26). Jesus' lack of fear was founded upon His union with the Father.

Long after the **Cross, Resurrection and Ascension**, Christ went to reveal some wonderful facts to John, His exiled "apostle of love." This *revealing* is recorded in the book of *Revelation!*

In Revelation 1: 8, 11, 17 we read of One who calls Himself the **Alpha** and **Omega**, the **Beginning** and the **End**, and the **First** and the **Last**; The **Almighty**. These terms are used again in Rev. 21:6 and 22:13. The One identified by those terms in chapter one, says in verse 18: "*I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hell and of Death.*" The same Divine Person speaking in the next chapter to one of the seven churches in what is now **Turkey**, uses the same identifying words, saying: "*These things says the First and the*

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HOLY ICEBERG!
(No swearing intended)

April 15, 1912, the Titanic sunk on its first voyage, after hitting an iceberg, which are typically only 1/9th above water. 1/10th of the mind is conscious & about 9/10th is subconscious. Much of life is lived in the subconscious; submerged like an iceberg, & waiting to sink us. Conversion to Christ in "The New Birth," deals largely with the conscious life. The cleansing & filling with the Holy Spirit, as on Pentecost, deals largely with this subconscious area. The Bible speaks of "a double-minded man;" a divided man. Pentecost unites the heart. The subconscious, a former slave, is redeemed, cleansed & controlled. The "iceberg" is made holy by the Spirit's fire! Freedom!



“YOU’RE MAD!”

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Last, who was dead, and came to life”-- (Rev. 2: 8). That can only be Jesus!

Jesus Christ is the long-promised Messiah-Saviour. As man cannot save himself, God knew He must step into the arena and accomplish that greatly needed task. That “task” forms part of **Christ’s unparalleled credentials**, as seen in Heb. 1:1-4, as follows:

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”

Did any other being—human or otherwise—before or since Christ’s brief earthly life and ministry—have such credentials as given above? I know of none in human history or in the spirit world.

So, as stated, Jesus was accused of being “mad” for claiming that His enemies wanted to kill Him. Some insight into why they wanted to kill Jesus is seen in the following verses:

“Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God” (John 5: 18).

“The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘We are not stoning You for a good work; but for blasphemy; and because that You, being a man, make Yourself God” (John 10: 33).

“They answered and said to Him,

‘Abraham is our father.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this”. (John 8: 39, 40. See following note).

NOTE: A little later, in John 8:58, Jesus is about to be stoned for claiming to have existed *before* Abraham! **Madness of a different sort?** No. His claim simply points to His pre-existence (before His Bethlehem birth) The Resurrection boldly declares that Jesus is **alive forevermore! The Beginning and the Ending!** His earthly birth was not His beginning, and the Cross—*though His death was real*—was not His end!

In John 7:19, Jesus asked His enemies *“Didn’t Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keep the law? Why do you go about to kill Me?”* Christ’s charge WAS not and IS not restricted to His Jewish enemies, then or now.

Soon after Pentecost, Jesus’ disciples, having been captured, but released (**after receiving severe threats!**), quoted OT verses like Psalm 2 which says: *“Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: ‘Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.’* (Acts 4: 24-26).

The points of the above verses are as follows:

1) Man’s hatred against the true identity and work of Jesus Christ is reflected in people’s unwillingness to totally surrender to Christ’s Supreme control over their life and affairs. This attitude is perfectly seen in the words of the people in Jesus’ story sermon: *“ But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us”* (Luke 19:14).

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2) God commands for all people and nations to submit to Christ’s complete control. The rejection, refusal or neglect of that command confirms man’s actual **rebellion against the Government** and Person of God Almighty Himself, and not merely against Jesus.

The point above is made elsewhere in the Bible, including in Jesus’ parables (story sermons). Jesus had said *“He who hates Me hates My Father also. “If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. “But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, *They hated Me without a cause [*quoted from that Messianic Psalm 69, verse 4].’* (John 15: 23-25).

Some people try to evade God’s command by trying to **demote** Jesus to the level of a prophet or and angel, or just a good man. Some merely deny Him altogether. Others **demean** or **disgrace** Christ by saying they admire or honour Him, yet refuse to submit to Him in total and unconditional surrender.

Yes, Jesus’ enemies said He was MAD. They further said that He was possessed of a devil! The Lord faithfully told us that all who love and follow Him can expect the same treatment (e.g. Matt. 10:24ff; Jn. 15: 18ff). One of Christ’s leading followers found out the truth of that warning. Possibly chained to a Roman guard, the apostle Paul made his defence for preaching the Old Testament foundation for Christ’s Supreme position and for Christ’s Resurrection. His defence was interrupted by governor Festus, who mocked: *“Paul, you are crazy—raving MAD! Your much learning is driving you insane!”* (Acts 26:24). See Paul’s powerful, yet polite reply to this Governor, as well as the King who sat beside him.

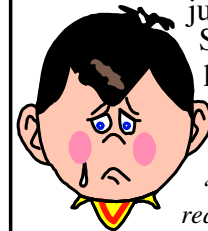
Paul had previously made his defence before Felix, another Roman governor (see Acts 24). With his defence resting on the same Firm Foundation, Paul admitted *“that according to the Way which they call heresy—a sect—I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets”* (v. 14).

Balaam was a non-Israeli man back in Moses’ time. Yet, he was greatly blessed and used of God, who had “opened his eyes.” Nevertheless, this man who God had so blessed decided, *once and for all*, to take earthly gain instead of eternal glory with God and His people. God even used this man’s faithful donkey to try to get through to this man’s head...his conscience...his sense of right and his sense of true values. In describing this event, Peter says *“but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man’s voice restrained the MADNESS of the prophet”* (2 Pet. 2:16). Sin blinds and binds. It’s a no-winner.

Balaam’s life was strangely amazing, yet ever so common. His intense desire for “rewards” caused him to sacrifice the *greatest* riches a person could ever hope to have. **MAD** Balaam was early Old Testament. *The Gospels* have **MAD** opponents of Jesus. *Then* we have Governors Felix and Festus. What about **TODAY? Who is MAD... and why?**

PLAYING TRUANT FROM OURSELVES

An old gentleman asked a little boy: “Whatever are you crying for, sonny?” The boy replied: “I’ve been playing truant all day, and I just found out that it is Saturday.” When we play truant against God, we play truant against ourselves.



God says:
“Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.” (Isa. 44:22)

We meet at Christ Church on the corner of Brent Street and Heriot Road in Hendon (NW4) at 5:45 pm Sundays. Nearest Tube: Hendon Central.