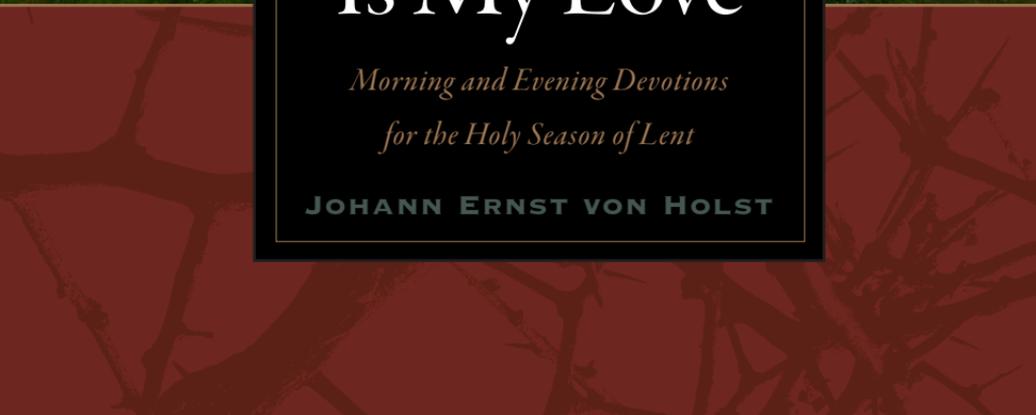
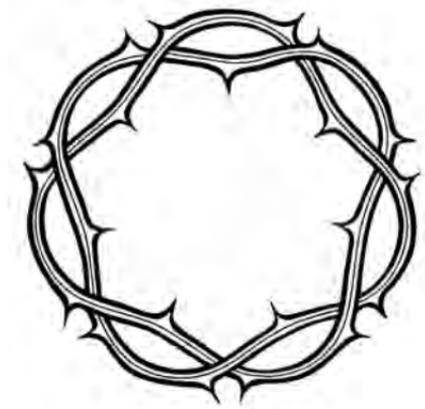


≈ The ≈  
Crucified  
Is My Love

*Morning and Evening Devotions  
for the Holy Season of Lent*

**JOHANN ERNST VON HOLST**





This is a preview. Get the entire book here.

# The Crucified Is My Love

*Morning and Evening Devotions  
for the Holy Season of Lent*

**JOHANN ERNST VON HOLST**

*Translated by Kathleen Hasenberg*

*Edited by Emmy Barth Maendel*



**PLOUGH PUBLISHING HOUSE**

This is a preview. Get the entire book here.

Published by Plough Publishing House  
Walden, New York  
Robertsbridge, England  
Elsmore, Australia  
www.plough.com

© 2017 by Plough Publishing House  
All rights reserved.

PRINT ISBN: 978-087486429

EPUB ISBN: 978-0874861020

MOBI ISBN: 978-0874861198

PDF ISBN: 978-0874861198

This is a preview. Get the entire book here.

# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>xi</i>
<b>Ash Wednesday to Saturday</b>	
1 The Lamb of God	3
2 Who Takes Away the Sin of the World	6
3 The Lord's Road	9
4 The Disciples' Road	12
5 The Fire of the Spirit and the Baptism of Suffering	15
6 Humble Yourself, My Heart	18
7 The Enemies Gather	21
8 The High Priest's Counsel	24
<b>First Week of Lent</b>	
9 The Anointing	29
10 Mary Is Justified	32
11 The King Enters Jerusalem	35
12 Immanuel's Tears	39
13 The Grain of Wheat	42
14 When I Am Lifted Up	45
15 Judas's Bargain	48

## CONTENTS

16	The Fig Tree	51
17	Where Is the Room?	54
18	The Passover Meal	57
19	The Disciples Quarrel	60
20	Foot Washing as Symbol	64
21	Foot Washing as Example	68
22	One of You Is Going to Betray Me	71

### Second Week of Lent

23	Judas's Night	77
24	The Appointment of the Holy Supper	81
25	For the Forgiveness of Sins	85
26	Do This in Remembrance of Me	88
27	The New Commandment	91
28	Peter Is Warned	94
29	I Am Going to the Father	97
30	The High Priestly Prayer	100
31	Christ's Prayer for His Apostles	104
32	Christ's Prayer for His Whole Church	108
33	Entering Gethsemane	112
34	The Prayer Battle in Gethsemane	115

*The Crucified Is My Love*

35	The Disciples Sleep	119
36	Whom Do You Seek?	122

### Third Week of Lent

37	I Am He	127
38	The Disciples' Safeguard	131
39	Judas's Kiss	134
40	Peter's Sword	137
41	It Must Be So	140
42	The Arrest	143
43	Christ before Annas	146
44	The False Witness	150
45	Jesus' Silence	153
46	Christ's Confession	156
47	The Death Sentence	159
48	Peter's Fall	162
49	Peter's Repentance	166
50	Judas's End	169

### Fourth Week of Lent

51	Handed Over to the Gentiles	175
52	What Have You Done?	178

## CONTENTS

53	The King of Truth	181
54	Jesus before Herod	184
55	The Precipitous Path	188
56	The Warning	191
57	The Dreadful Choice	194
58	Crucify Him! Crucify Him!	197
59	The Man of Sorrows	200
60	Behold the Man!	203
61	Where Are You From?	207
62	The Twisted World	210
63	Pilate Washes His Hands	214
64	Christ's Blood as Curse and as Blessing	217

### Fifth Week of Lent

65	He Bore His Cross	223
66	Simon of Cyrene	225
67	The Weeping Daughters of Jerusalem	228
68	The Lord's Last Call to Repentance	231
69	Golgotha	234
70	The Cross	237
71	The Crucifixion	240
72	Accounted a Criminal	243

*The Crucified Is My Love*

73	The Gathering of the Nations	246
74	The Inscription on the Cross	249
75	The First Word from the Cross	253
76	They Know Not What They Do	256
77	Lots Cast for His Clothes	259
78	The Mocking of the Crucified One	262

## Sixth Week of Lent

79	The Criminal's Repentance and His Faith	269
80	Today You Will Be with Me in Paradise	273
81	Christ's Farewell to His Own	277
82	His Testament of Love	280
83	Darkness	283
84	His Cry of Lamentation	286
85	I Thirst	290
86	The Drink of Vinegar	293
87	It Is Finished	296
88	The Torn Curtain	299
89	Father, into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit	302
90	The Death of Jesus	306
91	The Consequences of Jesus' Death	309
92	His Burial	313

## Preface

**JOHANN ERNST VON HOLST** (1828–1898) was a Lutheran pastor in the Baltic country of Latvia. In the 1800s Latvia had a strong German population that dated to the thirteenth century. These Germans were for the most part upright, community-minded citizens, deeply grounded in their Lutheran faith. Riga, the capital, was part of the Hanseatic League; its citizens were merchants. (Around 1890, Russia took over Latvia, forcing the Germans to emigrate to Germany or to accept “Russification” of their schools and public institutions.)

Von Holst served as pastor in Wenden (today Cesis). He was remembered for his lively narrations of Bible stories and detailed descriptions, particularly in his children’s sermons and confirmation classes. In 1877 he became senior pastor in the St. James Church in Riga. He was president of the board of Riga’s Magdalene Asylum – a home that gave women who had nowhere

*The Crucified Is My Love*

else to go work and accommodation.<sup>1</sup> He retired as pastor at Pentecost 1890 and died July 26, 1898.

Von Holst published a history and character sketch of the prophet Elijah in 1893, *Der Prophet Elias: Ein alt-testamentliches Geschichts- und Charakterbild*. A review of a collection of his sermons in 1876 described them as “fresh and spirit-filled,” “a real treasure, indisputably among the best homiletic literature of the Lutheran church.” “The sermons embrace all aspects of our inner life and vary in their tone. Sometimes it is the inviting love of the Savior, sometimes the dead seriousness of God’s prophets that moves the heart. The biblical interpretation is spiritual, the language noble and simple.”<sup>2</sup>

The Lenten devotions in this book were published in 1895, and the author gave a copy of the book to Elise Otto, a member of his congregation at New Year’s 1896 (my great-great-grandmother and the grandmother of Bruderhof founders Emmy Arnold and Else von Hollander). It has been passed down and cherished by the family, pulled out and read every Lent. Around 1980 Kathleen Hasenberg, a family friend, translated it into English.

---

<sup>1</sup> see *Rigasche Stadtblätter* 1895.

<sup>2</sup> *Rigasche Zeitung*, September 23, 1876.

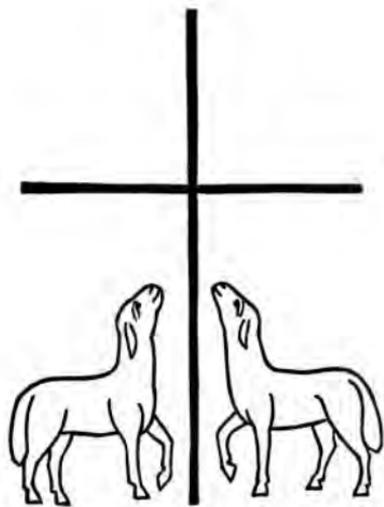
## P R E F A C E

In the original German, each devotion begins with a hymn, followed by the scripture text, the interpretation, a prayer, and a final hymn. In this English edition the hymns and prayers have been omitted. Von Holst's expositions with their vivid detail – sometimes imaginative and sometimes based on historic research – will draw readers into a deep contemplation of Christ's suffering and urge them to accept Jesus into their hearts.

*Emmy Barth Maendel*

The Days of Preparation  
Ash Wednesday  
to Saturday

This is a preview. Get the entire book [here](#).



This is a preview. Get the entire book here.

Ash Wednesday Morning

## The Lamb of God

*The next day [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

*John 1:29*

**"BEHOLD, THE FIRE AND THE WOOD,** but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Isaac asked his father, Abraham, on that strange journey (Gen. 22:7). His father answered, deeply moved, "God will provide for himself the lamb." But the lamb that God the Lord would in fact provide as a sacrifice for the lost world was described in this way by the prophet Isaiah: "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth" (Isa. 53:7).

*Ash Wednesday to Saturday*

Now John the Baptist stands in the fertile Jordan Valley. Light glows in his eyes, and lightning flashes from his preaching. His disciples surround him and very mixed throngs of people listen to his words.

Suddenly he is silent. Jesus of Nazareth, at that time still an unknown man, walks into the crowd's sight. John looks at him. The Spirit of God comes over him, and he recognizes in the simple wanderer the Messiah, promised and looked for with longing hearts for thousands of years, the servant of Jehovah, the Lamb of God.

Overwhelmed by this recognition, John points to the approaching man and calls out the momentous words, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" This utterance has made him the greatest of the prophets. What depth there is in these words! John grasps the divine mission of Jesus and his innermost nature, will, and work. He looks into the heart of God and into the opened heavens, but he also sees the curse of humankind's sin. He sees this burden laid upon the shoulders of this one man, who bears it and takes it away by his atoning death – and so sets the lost world free and founds a new, transfigured world.

Yes, this Jesus is the pure lamb. No one can accuse him of any sin, and the Father himself bears witness, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased"

## ASH WEDNESDAY MORNING

(Matt. 3:17). He is also the patient lamb, for he was obedient unto death, even to death on the cross. He is the gentle lamb, for while bleeding on the cross, he prays that his enemies may be forgiven. In everything he is the Lamb of God, the holy sacrificial lamb, through whom all who believe in him will be perfected in eternity.

This Lamb of God is our Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Savior, who loves us too with his eternal love. He suffered and died for us too, in order to make us blessed. Shouldn't we love him in return? Shouldn't we be grateful to him and faithfully follow him?

Today the time of celebrating the memory of his suffering and death begins. Will this Lenten season be a blessing to us? How often have we already lived through it, and how often has it passed by! Perhaps it now comes to us for the last time. Shall we die without taking the Lamb of God into our hearts? May God in his grace preserve us from that. May he overcome all the resistance of our old nature and bless this time of Lent for our eternal salvation.

Ash Wednesday Evening

## Who Takes Away the Sin of the World

*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*

*John 1:29*

**THIS TESTIMONY** of John's is the heart and the star of the whole gospel. It is true, John's mouth was soon closed by a bloody death, but the apostles proclaimed it further: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" They too have died, but this gospel rings through all centuries and hallows them. And when today the church of the Lord gathers to celebrate the Holy Supper, she looks up to the Crucified One and thousands of voices sing, "O Lamb of God, who bears the sin of the world, have mercy on us and give us your peace!"

## ASH WEDNESDAY EVENING

We are often weighed down with our work, our cares and suffering, but if we had to bear the full weight of our sin and guilt, we would sink under it into eternal night. The beam of the cross that the Lord carried to Golgotha on his torn and bleeding shoulders was heavy, but the invisible burden that rested on that cursed wood was heavier. It was not the sin of one man that was laid on the Lamb of God, but of all people – truly, the sin, guilt, and death penalty of the whole world. The season of Lent admonishes us to look well at this Lamb, and John exhorts us with his challenge, “Behold.”

Just as once the children of Israel in the wilderness, seeking help from the bites of fierce snakes, looked up to the bronze serpent, so we too would look to the Crucified One, who bore our burden and atoned for our guilt. We would look to him with ever fuller, ever deeper and more grateful faith. But for this, new and pure eyes are necessary. We must beg the Lord for these if we want to grasp our Redeemer’s suffering in the depths of our hearts.

With such eyes, my soul, contemplate your suffering Savior. See him in the garden of Gethsemane in the shadow of night, lying prostrate on his face, struggling with death and sweating drops of blood. See him in the judgment hall, bearing in silence the lashes of the cruel

*Ash Wednesday to Saturday*

executioner, enduring spitting and a crown of thorns. Take your place below the cross at Golgotha and hear the seven last words of the dying man. Look at the bloody wounds on his head, his limbs quivering with pain, his eyes filled with tears.

Look still deeper: look into the heart of Jesus and see his obedience to his Father and his compassion for you. See his heart break and his head bowed in death. Look until your heart also breaks in pain and love, and your eyes overflow with tears of gratitude. All who look at him and bear him in their souls like this together form the great invisible church of God here on earth, which will be revealed on the day of glory. She will see this Lamb again as her glorified, eternal king. Then she will experience the prophecy of the new covenant: “The Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 7:17).

Thursday Morning

## The Lord's Road

*And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise."*

*Luke 18:31-33*

**AS LONG AS THE TEMPLE OF JEHOVAH** was standing in Jerusalem and the beautiful services of the Lord were celebrated there, every year when spring came and the Passover festival was drawing near, the joyful cry rang out, "We are going up to Jerusalem!" It resounded in all the towns and villages, cottages and palaces of the Holy Land. When Jesus went to the festival for the first time with his parents as a twelve-year-old boy, how joyfully it rang in his soul: "We are going up to

Jerusalem!” This continued throughout his earthy walk to the first years of his mission.

How different in content and tone this call sounds in today’s text. Jesus was on his last journey and, accompanied by his disciples, came from the land on the east side of the Jordan into the southern Jordan Valley on the great military road that led to Jericho. This was the most beautiful and most fertile region in the whole land. The road led through avenues of palm trees, rose gardens, and fragrant fields. It was spring once more and the Passover was again near. Everything was green and in bloom; aromatic scents filled the air. Throngs of joyful pilgrims passed them from all directions. The pinnacles of Jericho glittered as they drew near. The road to Jerusalem, situated on the holy hill only a six-hour walk away, led through this town.

“We are going up to Jerusalem!” rang joyfully in the hearts of the pilgrims, and the Lord’s disciples and friends were filled with hope. They expected that there he would triumph at long last over the horde of the mighty and embittered foe and gloriously establish his kingdom. The Lord also said to his disciples these words, “We are going up to Jerusalem” – but what did he add? “The Son of Man will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated

## THURSDAY MORNING

and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.”

This pilgrimage was the road to his suffering and death, and he walked it with unflinching faithfulness. For his heart glowed with love for his Jerusalem. It was the city of the great king, his anointed ancestor David, and it was the city of the great God, his heavenly Father.

His soul was filled with deep sadness: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” (Matt. 23:37) Since he could do nothing else for his royal city, he wanted to die in her and for her. His road to the heavenly Jerusalem for which he longed passed through this earthly, doomed Jerusalem. There is no city on earth today that has the significance of the old Jerusalem – but we yearn for the heavenly one of which we sing.

Thursday Evening

## The Disciples' Road

*And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise." But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.*

*Luke 18:31-34*

**WHEN THE LORD TOLD THEM** what he would have to suffer, the souls of his listeners were stunned as if by a thunderclap. "But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said." They heard but did not understand; they saw but did not perceive (Mark 4:12). They understood nothing of the Lord's thoughts because

## THURSDAY EVENING

they were full of their own ideas. They did not want to hear of suffering and death, for they were dreaming of happiness and glory. They saw in their mind's eye the dawning glory of the Messiah's kingdom with its proclamation of healing and salvation. They thought that what the Master was saying about shame, suffering, and death must be some kind of parable, meaning something quite different from the actual words. They felt only one thing: that there was something terribly oppressive in the Lord's words, so they continued on their way with him, half-stunned.

But the Lord knew exactly what was awaiting him. He foresaw the shadows of Gethsemane and felt the horror of the cross on Golgotha. He had the power to turn back at each step and return to his Father's glory, yet he went forward. What was it that urged him to go this way to the end? It was obedience to his Father's will, compassionate love toward the lost world. So he strode on to his bloody death, but in his heart he bore the comfort of a victorious resurrection. And wherever he went and wherever he stayed, heavenly blessing lay on his work – such as the blind man who was healed by his faith (Mark 10:52) and the salvation that came to Zacchaeus (Luke 19:9).

*Ash Wednesday to Saturday*

But the Lord did not say, “I am going up to Jerusalem.” He said, “We are going.” It is this “we” that we have to emphasize. For it does not apply only to those first disciples; it also applies to us insofar as we want to be his followers. For us, too, the way to glory passes through suffering and death. To suffer with Christ for sin in the obedience of faith; to give up all foolish wishes and vain hopes with our eyes fixed on him; with him and in love to him to give our old self up to death; to die with him in quiet confidence in a blessed resurrection when our last hour comes; and then to be with him forever in the heavenly Jerusalem – this is our task.

If a stranger should ask us on our pilgrim way, “Where are you going?” then our whole life and being should answer, “We are going up to Jerusalem.” When young people are accepted into the church and then have to face the world, when newlyweds begin their married life together, when men or women are given a new task – they should say to themselves, “We are going up to Jerusalem.” Not only at this season of Lent when we accompany our Lord on his way to suffering and the cross, but throughout our whole walk on this earth, both in the springtime and in the winter of life, may this remain our watchword: “We are going up to Jerusalem.”

