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Beliefs of Our Fathers: Angels, Demons, and Satan

Chapter 6

This continues a study on the beliefs of our forefathers, based largely on the 1632 Dordrecht Confession of Faith. This section tells about Ecclesiology, or the study of the Church. This has been edited for space.

Angels, Demons, and Satan

Angelology and Demonology

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth; visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. (Colossians 1:16)

Introduction

Most of us grew up knowing that angels, demons, and the devil exist, but what do we know about them? Usually, our churches taught very little about the extent of their power or the function of the spirit. No one talked much about angels. The term “Holy Ghost,” rather than the term “Holy Spirit,” was most commonly used, which gave many of us a spooky concept of the spirit world. Throughout history, an absence of biblical knowledge has often resulted in superstition filling the void. The word

“spirit” simply means a supernatural being without a flesh-and-blood body. Scripture shows us that these spirits are typically invisible, though they may appear in visible form or even as men.

On the other hand, we were taught much about Satan and his desire to lead us astray from God. The blame for many of our sinful actions was attributed to him. Satan and hell went hand-in-hand and instilled much fear in us. Threats to make us behave often tapped into this fear.

There are a variety of false teachings about the spirit world—some that can raise your hair. By diligent study of God’s Word, though, we can understand why God created these invisible creatures, their purpose and involvement in our lives, and whether we should fear them or not.

What the Anabaptists Teach

We find these few comments on the subject of angels and demons in the Dordrecht Confession of Faith:

- [God] is the Creator of all things visible and invisible. (Article 1)
- Adam and Eve were seduced by the subtlety and deceit of the serpent,

and the envy of the devil. (Article 2)

- . . . nor through angels . . . could [they] be raised. (Article 2)
- . . . destroyed the works of the devil. (Article 4)
- God . . . will dwell and walk among them, and preserve them, so that no floods or tempests, nay, not even the gates of hell, shall move or prevail against them. (Article 8)

The subject is touched upon in parts of *In Meiner Jugend* (an Amish devotional book), under “Rules of a Godly Life.” We read in Part 1:

- Think often on . . . hell, for there is nothing more unbearable. (No. 3)
- Likewise, even the smallest sin, if it is cherished and not repented of, can bring a man down to hell. (No. 11)
- The way to hell is always full of wandering souls. . . . God would say, “Because you have sinned with the majority, you must also be cast into hell with the majority.” (No. 14)

Then in Part 3 we find:

- Satan can possess your soul and keep it in his control by means of a single sin.” (No. 2)

- Avoid idleness as a resting-pillow of the devil . . . Great is the power the devil has over the slothful. (No. 10)
- No sin was punished more severely than pride. It changed angels into devils. (No. 11)

One of the prayers of *In Meiner Jugend* touches upon the subject of demons:

“Let me not be an instrument of the evil spirit lest he exercise and fulfill his wickedness . . . through me. For such is the image of Satan” (page 111).

Later in this same document, candidates for baptism are asked to “renounce the devil” (page 195).

From all of these passages, we gained a fear and a ready awareness of the presence of evil spirits.

What the Scriptures Teach

Who Are These Invisible Spirits?

As Colossians 1:16 states, God created the invisible world—the spirit world. The Bible commonly calls beings from this realm angels, yet God has many other names for them: cherubim, seraphim, messengers, hosts of the Lord or of heaven, ministers, powers, principalities, stars or morning stars, rulers in high places, and sons of God. Some are referred to by specific names: Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12), Gabriel (Daniel 9:21; Luke 1:19), and Michael (Jude 9). Others are simply referred to in a general sense as those who ruled over other angels, too numerous for us to count (Rev. 5:11).

We know the angels were in existence before God created the earth because when God *laid the foundations of the earth . . . the morning stars sang*

together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38:4, 7). They were created as holy, eternal creatures (they don’t die).

We know angels are mighty in strength. David wrote: *Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word* (Psalm 103:20).

Jesus told us that angels do not marry, *For when they [men] shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven* (Mark 12:25). We humans were made a little lower than the angels, and the human side of Jesus was also made a little lower than the angels so He would be able to die (Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:9). Yet as the Son of God, He was so much better than the angels, and all the angels of God were urged to worship Him (Hebrews 1:4, 6). Jesus has authority over them, because He created them, *which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ* (Ephesians 3:9). Even though the angels are higher, mightier, and wiser than we are, we must never give our worship to them. *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels*, but we can thank the Lord for them (Colossians 2:18).

What Is Their Purpose?

Angels were created as *ministering [serving] spirits, sent forth to minister [to believers in Christ]* (Hebrews 1:14). What a comforting thought to know that God sends out His angels to help us in our weakness and ignorance. Throughout the Bible, we read many instances of angels coming to earth to attend to God’s

people or to deliver messages to them:

An angel ministered to Elijah in the wilderness:

And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee (1 Kings 19:5–7).

The beggar Lazarus *died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom* (Luke 16:22).

Peter was put in prison by Herod and heavily guarded, and an angel was sent by God to set Peter free (Acts 12:7–11).

Hagar fled when Sarai treated her harshly, and an angel helped them (Genesis 16:7–11).

There was a pool called Bethesda in Jerusalem where many sick people gathered and *an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had* (John 5:4).

After Jesus had been in the tomb for three days, *there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and*

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said unto the women, *Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified* (Matthew 28:2-5).

An angel even spoke through Balaam's donkey (Numbers 22:22-31).

God used angels to announce his great plan of salvation to Abraham, Zacharias, and Mary and Joseph, but the list of angels' involvement with humans in history could fill a book of its own. Angels do God's will in heaven as well as on earth, and God still uses them in our lives.

The Bible tells us that God gave His angels the job of protecting us. *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone* (Psalm 91:11-12). In this way, God protected Daniel in the lions' den, and Daniel proclaimed, *My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me* (Daniel 6:22). In Psalm 34:7, David tells us that *the angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them*.

How comforting that even our little children who haven't yet come to faith in Christ are watched over by angels. Jesus told those who were following Him to *take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven* (Matthew 18:10). When they do come to trust fully in Jesus alone, the heavenly Father and His angels rejoice together as they do for every sinner who repents. Jesus said: *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. . . . There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth* (Luke 15:7, 10).

The angels observe us, watching God's every move on earth in amazement of His grace and mercy, and probably in

disbelief at our rebellion toward God.

Another task given to angels is one of delivering judgment on those who reject God on earth. For instance, the angel of the Lord smote Herod because he did not give God the glory (Acts 12:23). There are many examples where angels were used to destroy human lives because of their open rebellion against God's grace. After David had numbered the people, God used an angel to bring judgment (2 Samuel 24:16).

In 2 Kings 19:35, we read that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed 185,000 Assyrians. We see in the book of Revelation that God will use angels to pour out His wrath upon the earth.

Who Are the Devil and His Demons?

The devil's name was originally Lucifer, the anointed cherub whose heart was lifted up in pride (Ezekiel 28:14, 17). In his pride and conceit, he vowed he would become like the most High. The Almighty gave His angels great strength, but how could one of His created beings ever think he could become like his Creator? Yet in Isaiah we read that Lucifer said, *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High* (Isaiah 14:13-14).

God will not tolerate anything contrary to His character. He is perfect. No one can improve upon His might, wisdom, or beauty. Anything inferior to His perfection must be removed from His presence. Lucifer chose to serve himself, for which he was cast out of God's dwelling place. Jesus explained that when the time comes, Satan will be cast into the place of torment *prepared for the devil and his angels* (Matthew 25:41). Satan greatly underestimated God and His Word.

After he rebelled, Lucifer, whose name

means the shining one or the star of the morning, became Satan, the adversary, the enemy. He is also called the devil. The angels who followed him in his rebellion became known as demons. They are allowed by God to roam this earth until the time of their eternal punishment. Yet some are being held in captivity until the judgment day because of their great sin. Second Peter 2:4 says, *God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment*. Jude wrote, *And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day* (Jude 6).

These demons have the ability to possess and control a man as they did in the country of the Gadarenes: *There met [Jesus] out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains. . . . And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones* (Mark 5:2-3, 5). This poor man was tormented by demons, but Jesus cast these unclean spirits out and sent them into a herd of swine. Jesus later reminded His disciples that they would cast out demons in His name (Mark 16:17).

When we consider all of Scripture, we see that demons cannot dwell together with the Holy Spirit within a true believer. For example, 2 Corinthians 6:15-16 tells us that Christ and the devil cannot dwell together, for when we become believers, we become the temple of the living God.

Satan has become the god of our world's system. *The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them* (2 Corinthians 4:4). The once shining one now seeks to put out the light of

Continued
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of light. He entered our world and deceived his way into the life of Eve, which spread to Adam and to every generation born after him (Gen. 3:1–6).

Satan is effective with his talent for deception, and most of the human race has chosen to worship him, the creature, rather than God, the Creator. Romans 1:21–25 reveals the progression of evil into our world because of Satan’s influence and our unbelief.

Satan is the father of lies, as Jesus stated: *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it* (John 8:44).

Satan refuses to believe that he was defeated at the cross and that we were set free from his hold, but we know *there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death* (Romans 8:1–2). Satan continues his assault on us.

We must remember that he is a defeated enemy and will leave this world in shame, spending eternity in torment, taking with him those he has infected with rebellion against God. *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire* (Revelation 20:10, 15).

Casting Out Evil Spirits

Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. (Matthew 17:21)

When Jesus sent the twelve apostles on their first mission, He gave them power

and authority over demons and diseases. Both the healing of sickness and casting out of demons served as signs that the kingdom of God had come. When seventy others were sent out as recorded in Luke, they also had power over demons. *The seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name* (Luke 10:17). After Jesus ascended into heaven and established the church through the coming of the Holy Spirit, we see that people in the days of the early church were healed of sickness and unclean spirits. *There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one* (Acts 5:16).

It is God who grants believers power and authority over demons. When Jesus, Peter, James, and John came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, they were greeted by a multitude of people. From among them, a father came up to Jesus and pleaded for Him to heal his son. He had brought the boy to the disciples, but they were unable to heal him.

Their inability was due to a lack of faith in Christ, not a lack of power or authority (Matthew 17:17–20). Jesus went on to offer a solution to this lack of faith, saying, *This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting* (Matthew 17:21). Prayer and fasting aren’t some sort of magical step that gives us power. Instead, they are spiritual disciplines that get our eyes off ourselves and draw us nearer to God and to all He is, which increases our faith in Him. God does not give His power to the faithless, and He chooses when and where to grant that authority and power.

When an unclean spirit departs from a person, it leaves behind a vacancy (emptiness) (Luke 11:24–26). In some cases, the person may try to amend his life on his own. This “cleaning up” or turning over a new leaf, when accomplished by our own determination,

is only temporary. We may be prompted to change ourselves by religion, pressure to conform, pleasing others, or ridding ourselves of the consequences of our bad behavior. In this way the house may be put in order, but it is uninhabited—empty. In Luke, the demon couldn’t find another place to live, and so decided to go back where it had been, along with seven other unclean spirits which also entered that man, making his state worse than it was before.

In contrast, God’s desire is to fill that vacancy in our hearts with His Holy Spirit. When we believe in Jesus and His death, burial, and resurrection, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside us. First John 4:3–4 says: *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, but for those who are children of God, greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.* When the Holy Spirit moves into your life, you don’t have to fear the evil ones, because you are able to overcome them by God’s power (1 John 2:14; Ephesians 6:10–13).

Being born again does not mean that we will be sinless. Sin breaks our fellowship with God. As His children, we know that God is ready to forgive us, and we need to turn to Him immediately. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9).

Unfortunately, human tendency is to not recognize sin for what it is, instead harboring sin in our hearts while accusing others of the same things we are guilty of. However, by the power of the Holy Spirit who resides in us, God wants to help us avoid sin in the future (Galatians 5:16).

What Is God’s Purpose in Allowing the Devil and the Demons to Live?

We all ask why God didn’t send the devil and his demons to the lake of fire immediately after their rebellion. Believe it or not, God uses Satan as a part of His plan. Paul told the Corinthians: *Let I*

should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure (2 Corinthians 12:7). Paul knew he could easily be proud of his knowledge of the Lord, but this thorn kept him humble.

All things were created by [God], and for him. He forms light, and He creates darkness. He makes peace and also creates evil (Isaiah 45:7). He created the angels who rebelled, and He uses them in His great and mighty plan.

How would we know the greatness of God's love, mercy, and truth if we didn't have the contrast of Satan's hate, injustice, and lies? God, in His all-knowing ways, allows the evil ones to torment and tempt us and spread their lies to us. Even Jesus was allowed to be touched by Satan's hand through persecution, through temptation, and through death.

As we consider God's use of Satan in the life of Job, we see that God is the one in charge. He is the one who allowed Satan to use his destructive hand on Job. He gave Satan the power to destroy. Satan, even though he is described as *a roaring lion . . . seeking whom he may devour* (1 Peter 5:8), cannot touch us without God's permission. In Job chapters 38–42, we see that the Almighty really knows what He is doing when He allows evil to afflict our lives. When the evil one is allowed to use his influence in our lives, it is for a good purpose, *for we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose* (Romans 8:28). God desires obedience, and when we fail to obey Him, we must be prodded with painful experiences to get where He wants us to be, for He knows that *godly sorrow worketh repentance* (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Don't forget, the evil ones are created beings. They don't have God's unlimited

power to be in all places at once. They are limited to only one location at a time. That is why Satan is constantly *going to and fro in the earth* (Job 1:7).

Evil spirits don't have all knowledge as God does. They cannot read our minds, but by observing our actions, they can see where our interests and weaknesses lie and seek to pull us further into sin. They are crafty, sneaky, and very clever in their ways to keep us from worshiping the true and living God of the universe. They constantly try to influence our minds with their lies. That's why God urges us to guard our minds. *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer* (Psalm 19:14).

Satan will do anything and use anyone to gain our love, loyalty, and obedience. It seems Satan's most common method for drawing us into his hold is to imitate Christ by forming false religions to pull in the masses. The apostle Paul, in a sermon to the immature church at Corinth, stated: For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. *Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers [demons] also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end [judgment] shall be according to their works* (2 Corinthians 11:14–15). It is our works that destroy us. It is the Savior's work that saves us. God warns us again through Paul in Colossians about Satan's type of religion—a religion of human works that makes us feel worthy of God's grace. *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ* (Colossians 2:8).

The evil spirits trick us into worshiping anything other than God Almighty. An idol is anything we deem as more important or more valuable than what God has told us—our personal belongings, our church teachings, our

ancestors' ways, or even our parents' advice. If we pledge our loyalty to them before our loyalty to Christ, it is evil, for there are only two roads in life: God's and man's. *No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other* (Luke 16:13). Man's road is Satan's road, for he is our heavenly father unless we turn to the true heavenly Father.

Getting to know God through His Word is the most important thing we can do in our lifetime. Without a good knowledge of the Bible, we might blindly follow Satan, and we won't even realize it is happening. A. W. Tozer once said, "No religion can rise higher than its concept of God." By putting other things or people above our relationship with God, we will only have a cheap religion that is not God's.

From what we read in Scripture, we see that Satan attracts people into his world by offering them power, just as he dared to do with Jesus Christ:

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (Luke 4:6–8)

Once pulled in by the experience of Satan's powers, a person will only want more and more. Others may think they are under a curse from which they cannot escape. It is true that angels, whether good or evil, are greater in power and might than we are (2 Peter 2:11), but angels and demons are always subject to the name of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:21).

People influenced or possessed by evil spirits often suffer mental problems, have obsessions with sex or greed, or try to destroy themselves and others. They

become violently angry or have a strong disrespect toward authority. They also battle with guilty minds and unreasonable fears. We must not underestimate an evil spirit's power to convince us, as he did Eve, that sinning will bring us greater knowledge and freedom.

Many people are convinced that they have committed the unpardonable sin by dabbling with the devil. They read of instances in the Bible of God's refusal to pardon Manasseh for shedding much innocent blood, but it was the heart of Manasseh that God judged. His murderous ways were evidence of his rejection of God (2 Kings 21:16).

Matthew 12:31–32 speaks of the Pharisees who resisted Christ much, and even attributed Christ's power as Satan's. Jesus's answer is sometimes misunderstood, and some become fearful and uncertain: *Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy [denying, cursing] shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.*

Jesus makes it very clear in Matthew 12 how we will know on which side we are. *He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad* (Matthew 12:30). Do not worry about whether or not some past sin will keep you from heaven, and do not let Satan's lies discourage you. If your heart is still towards the Lord and not against him, you likely have nothing to fear. Focus on gathering with Jesus, and let the Holy Spirit lead you into all good things.

Our suffering and torment at the hands of evil spirits may be God's method of turning us from sin. If we respond with a

contrite and repentant heart, He is then able to forgive, comfort, strengthen, love, and impart wisdom to us. God will never give the believer in Christ more trials than he is able to handle, and He will always provide a way of escape. *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it* (1 Corinthians 10:13).

How Can We Guard Ourselves against Satan and His Evil Spirits?

The gospel of Christ is the only power we have against Satan's domain, *for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek* (Romans 1:16). The only way to avoid Satan's possession of us is to admit our rebellion toward God and accept Christ's work on the cross as our only method of salvation from sin, Satan, and eternal hell.

This one act of total surrender allows the Holy Spirit to possess us, change us, and protect us. This does not mean that the evil spirits will leave us alone, but it makes it impossible for them to enter our body to control it. The demons will continue to harass our minds, but we can even be delivered from that.

As Erwin Lutzer says in his book *God's Devil*, we need:

- **Faith** in the blood of Christ for salvation: *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood* (Romans 3:24–25).
- **Repentance** from sin: *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise* (Psalm 51:17).
- **To be filled with the Holy Spirit** as a continual surrender to His will: *And*

be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord (Ephesians 5:18–19).

- **To believe God's promises** for Christians: *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness* (2 Peter 3:13).

Our real battles take place in the invisible world, not with our fellow man, *for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places* (Ephesians 6:12).

Strive to bring glory to the name of God. He wants to be your sanctuary, your room of safety. Run to the arms of the loving Father whenever you sense a demon assaulting you. Call for Him to rebuke the evil ones and trust His promises. If you don't know what those promises are, make an effort to read your Bible over and over and memorize those promises.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, Savior of my soul, deliver me from the evil spirits who seek to bring shame to Your name through me. Please place Your hedge of protection around me. Fill me with Your Spirit that I might not sin against You. Thank you for Your forgiveness. Thank You for the power to turn from sin. Thank You for Your promises to guide and protect me. Help me to die to self-confidence and deliver me from fear. *For I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me* (Galatians 2:20). I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

End

Feedback and Response Section

1

Dear Amish Voice,
I would like to order two copies of the book, *What Do the Amish Believe?* I also want to thank you for all the effort and

Hello, F. H. ,

We hope that you enjoy the books, and we are glad that you enjoy the *Amish Voice*. We want to continue printing the truth and love of God's Word.

You are right that many people do not teach the truth, and even some of the

work you put into the *Amish Voice*! I do so enjoy it! There is so much truth in it and it keeps me encouraged to know that others believe as I believe. Many people are not taught the truth of the

cults like the Jehovah's Witnesses are trying to take their beliefs to others in Amish communities, but they end up deceiving people by teaching that which is contrary to the Bible.

That is why it is so important that we each read and study the Bible and see if

Word of God, so I am glad to read the *Amish Voice*. Keep praying!

Sincerely,

F. H., MO

what we are taught is really what the Bible says. We hope you continue to enjoy the *Amish Voice* for many years to come, growing nearer to Jesus every day.

We will keep praying, as you encouraged us to do. You keep praying, too!

—Paul Miller

2

Dear Amish Voice,
I have wanted to let you know for a long time already that I appreciate the *Amish Voice*. I have been getting it for more than two years and I just wanted to let you know how much my life has been impacted by the Bible truth that you

Dear M. H.,

Thank you for your encouraging words. May you always seek the truth of the Word of God.

While many church leaders encourage their people to read the Bible on their own, I, too, have heard of some who do not want their people reading the Bible. They want their people to be told what to believe instead of following Jesus and

point out. Some churches warn everyone in their communities not to read the *Amish Voice*. This bothered me a lot because I was able to learn so much, so I kept on reading them.

One of the bishops in our community started a Bible study with his family, and when the church found out about it,

seeing what God says.

This reminds me of Martin Luther and the Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church did not want people reading the Bible on their own. They said that the church leaders needed to tell the people what the Bible meant. I am glad that Martin Luther and others wanted to get the Bible into the hands and hearts of the people. Once the people read the

they threatened to excommunicate him. The last I heard, he quit having the Bible studies because of fear.

Thank you for the *Amish Voice* and the biblical truths that you teach. We must keep following God.

Sincerely,

M. H., OH

truth of God's Word, they could be set free from dead works and religion.

Jesus taught us to search and know the Scriptures, and Paul told Timothy that the Holy Scriptures are able to make us *wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus* (2 Timothy 3:15).

We hope that you keep reading the *Amish Voice*, and especially the Bible!

—Paul Miller

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September

When Our Burdens Seem Unbearable, Part 1

Charles Stanley explains that we all experience times when we feel overwhelmed. Our patience and hope wear thin as our energy is drained under the weight of our responsibilities. We feel helpless and discouraged, wondering if there is a way to escape our troubles. When your heart feels heavy and your body is weary, where do you turn?

The Testing of Your Faith

Do you feel you're being tested right now? And how do you know if it is God testing you or Satan tempting you? Find out how to face the test and pass it in this message by Pastor Adrian Rogers.

Four Kinds of Love, Parts 1 and 2

Chip Ingram continues his discussion about how to find real love, how to grow it, and how to keep it forever.

October

When Our Burdens Seem Unbearable, Part 2

This is part two of Charles Stanley's message about turning to God in times of difficulty and when we need strength, comfort, and hope.

Transforming Power of Faith

Adrian Rodgers speaks from Hebrews 11:31 and explains the story of Rahab, a harlot whose life was radically, dramatically, eternally changed by faith. Hear how God can change your life, too.

How a Wife Won Her Husband: His Testimony

Through the testimony of a husband who engaged in online

affairs, Emerson and Jonathan Eggerichs discuss and respond to his report that his wife facilitated the reconciliation through her words and behavior. He said, "She showed me respect when I did not deserve it."

Knowing Who You Are in Christ

Michele Cushatt joins Focus on the Family to discuss the struggles she endured through three bouts with cancer, and how her faith in Jesus Christ brought her to a place of peace with herself and with God.

November

The Landmine of Sexual Sin, Parts 1 and 2

The Bible teaches that sinful activity carries serious consequences. This is especially true of sexual sin. No matter what the world may say, sexual sin is a devastating landmine that speeds you along a path of shame and destruction. That is why it is so crucial to understand the devastating consequences and protect themselves against it. Charles Stanley teaches you how to receive God's forgiveness for past failures and how to live a life of purity that honors Him.

The Power of Prayer: How to Pray with Absolute Confidence, Parts 1 and 2

Listen to Chip Ingram as he talks about praying with confidence. When you need to hear from God—you're faced with a big decision, a relationship is failing, a doctor report comes in with news you didn't expect—how can you pray and know for sure that He will hear you?

Martin Luther on Galatians

We also plan to add a section of the reading of Martin Luther's Commentary on Galatians each month!

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Do you ever wonder what would happen if Jacob Amman were alive today and had the same beliefs as he had in the seventeenth century? I recently spent some time reading the Dordrecht Confession of Faith, and it made me wonder if some of our beliefs are different than what they used to be.

Let me review a little history. The Dordrecht Confession of Faith was composed by seventeenth-century Dutch Anabaptist leaders, and it was adopted on April 21, 1632, at a Mennonite Conference held at Dordrecht, Holland. Twenty-eight years later, in 1660, it was formally adopted by Swiss Brethren ministers and elders in Ohnenheim, France. Jakob Ammann, born in 1644, was a member of the Swiss Brethren, having converted from the state church sometime between 1671 and 1680.

The Amish movement began among the Swiss Brethren in 1693, thirty-three years after the Dordrecht Confession had been adopted. Jakob Ammann and others among the Swiss Brethren felt that their churches had drifted from the truth and were compromising what was written in the Dordrecht Confession, specifically regarding the severity of shunning, the practice of foot washing, and the idea that Anabaptist sympathizers (“the true-hearted”) should be considered to be saved people even though they would not submit to re-baptism and follow Christ. Thus occurred the Amish schism from the Swiss Brethren.

Unquestionably, Jakob Ammann and the original Amish Christians believed everything in the Dordrecht Confession. Old Order Amish and others today still subscribe to the Dordrecht Confession.

Below are Articles 2–8, including each article’s biblical references. I agree wholeheartedly with everything in all of these articles, as they are entirely

biblical. The complete Dordrecht Confession of Faith can be found in *The Martyrs Mirror*.

I have underlined the many statements contained within the Dordrecht Confession that stand in stark contrast to the contemporary idea that all we can do is hope to get to heaven and that we can’t know if we were good enough until we stand before God. From what I have read and learned, those are ideas that Jakob Ammann and his followers at the time would have wholeheartedly rejected.

Articles 2–8 of the Dordrecht Confession of Faith

II. Of the Fall of Man

We believe and confess, according to the holy Scriptures, that these our first parents, Adam and Eve, did not continue long in this glorious state in which they were created, but that they, seduced by the subtlety and deceit of the serpent, and the envy of the devil, transgressed the high commandment of God and became disobedient to their Creator; through which disobedience sin has come into the world, and death by sin, which has thus passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, and, hence, brought upon themselves the wrath of God, and condemnation; for which reason they were of God driven out of Paradise, or the pleasure garden, to till the earth, in sorrow to eat of it, and to eat their bread in the sweat of their face, till they should return to the earth, from which they were taken; and that they, therefore, through this one sin, became so ruined, separated, and estranged from God, that they, neither through themselves, nor through any of their descendants, nor through angels, nor men, nor any other creature in heaven or on earth, could be raised up, redeemed, or reconciled to God, but would have had to be eternally lost, had not God, in compassion for His

creatures, made provision for it, and interposed with His love and mercy. Genesis 3:6; 4 Esdras 3:7; Romans 5:12, 18; Genesis 3:23; Psalm 49:8; Revelation 5:9; John 3:16.

III. Of the Restoration of Man through the Promise of the Coming Christ

Concerning the restoration of the first man and his posterity we confess and believe, that God, notwithstanding their fall, transgression, and sin, and their utter inability, was nevertheless not willing to cast them off entirely, or to let them be forever lost; but that He called them again to Him, comforted them, and showed them that with Him there was yet a means for their reconciliation, namely, the immaculate Lamb, the Son of God, who had been foreordained thereto before the foundation of the world, and was promised them while they were yet in Paradise, for consolation, redemption, and salvation, for themselves as well as for their posterity; yea, who through faith, had, from that time on, been given them as their own; for whom all the pious patriarchs, unto whom this promise was frequently renewed, longed and inquired, and to whom, through faith, they looked forward from afar, waiting for the fulfillment, that He by His coming, would redeem, liberate, and raise the fallen race of man from their sin, guilt; and unrighteousness. John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:19; Genesis 3:15; 1 John 3:8; 2:1; Hebrews 11:13, 39; Galatians 4:4.

IV. The Advent of Christ into this World, and the Reason of His Coming

... We confess and believe also, that this is the same whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, without beginning of days, or end of life; of whom it is testified that He Himself is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and

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the ending, the first and the last; that He is the same, and no other, who was foreordained, promised, sent, and came into the world; who is God's only, first and own Son; who was before John the Baptist, before Abraham, before the world; yea, who was David's Lord, and the God of the whole world, the first-born of every creature; who was brought into the world, and for whom a body was prepared, which He yielded up as a sacrifice and offering, for a sweet savor unto God, yea, for the consolation, redemption, and salvation of all mankind. John 3:16; Hebrews 1:6; Romans 8:32; John 1:30; Matthew 22:43; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 10:5.

But as to how and in what manner this precious body was prepared, and how the Word became flesh, and He Himself man, in regard to this we content ourselves with the statement pertaining to this matter which the worthy evangelists have left us in their accounts, according to which we confess with all the saints, that He is the Son of the living God, in whom alone consist all our hope, consolation, redemption, and salvation, which we neither may nor must seek in any other. Luke 1:31–32; John 20:31; Matthew 16:16.

. . . The Son of God died, and tasted death and shed His precious blood for all men; and that He thereby bruised the serpent's head, destroyed the works of the devil, annulled the handwriting and obtained forgiveness of sins for all mankind; thus becoming the cause of eternal salvation for all those who, from Adam unto the end of the world, each in his time, believe in, and obey Him. Genesis 3:15; 1 John 3:8; Colossians 2:14; Romans 5:18.

V. The Law of Christ, i.e., the Holy Gospel or the New Testament

We also believe and confess that before His ascension He instituted His New

Testament . . . to be proclaimed in His name by His beloved apostles, messengers, and ministers—whom He called, chose, and sent into all the world for that purpose—among all peoples, nations, and tongues; and repentance and remission of sins to be preached and testified of; and that He accordingly has therein declared all men without distinction, who through faith, as obedient children, heed, follow, and practice what the same contains, to be His children and lawful heirs; thus excluding no one from the precious inheritance of eternal salvation, except the unbelieving and disobedient, the stiff-necked and obdurate, who despise it, and incur this through their own sins, thus making themselves unworthy of eternal life. Jeremiah 31:31; Hebrews 9:15–17; Matthew 26:28; Galatians 1:8; 1 Timothy 6:3; John 15:15; Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Romans 8:17; Acts 13:46.

VI. Of Repentance and Reformation of Life

We believe and confess, that, since the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, and, therefore, prone to all unrighteousness, sin, and wickedness, the first lesson of the precious New Testament of the Son of God is repentance and reformation of life, and that, therefore, those who have ears to hear, and hearts to understand, must bring forth genuine fruits of repentance, reform their lives, believe the Gospel, eschew evil and do good, desist from unrighteousness, forsake sin, put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness: for, neither baptism, supper, church, nor any other outward ceremony, can without faith, regeneration, change or renewing of life, avail anything to please God or to obtain of Him any consolation or promise of salvation; but we must go to God with an upright heart, and in perfect

faith, and believe in Jesus Christ, as the Scripture says, and testifies of Him; through which faith we obtain forgiveness of sins, are sanctified, justified, and made children of God, yea, partake of His mind, nature, and image, as being born again of God from above, through incorruptible seed. Genesis 8:21; Mark 1:15; Ezekiel 12:2; Colossians 3:9–10; Ephesians 4:22, 24; Hebrews 10:22–23; John 7:38.

VII. Of Holy Baptism

Concerning baptism we confess that all penitent believers, who, through faith, regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, are made one with God, and are written in heaven, must, upon such Scriptural confession of faith, and renewing of life, be baptized with water, in the most worthy name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, according to the command of Christ, and the teaching, example, and practice of the apostles, to the burying of their sins, and thus be incorporated into the communion of the saints; henceforth to learn to observe all things which the Son of God has taught, left, and commanded His disciples. Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:19–20; Romans 6:4; Mark 16:16; Matthew 3:15; Acts 8:16; Acts 9:18; Acts 10:47; Acts 16:33; Colossians 2:11–12.

VIII. Of the Church of Christ

We believe in, and confess a visible church of God, namely, those who, as has been said before, truly repent and believe, and are rightly baptized; who are one with God in heaven, and rightly incorporated into the communion of the saints here on earth. These we confess to be the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, who are declared to be the bride and wife of Christ, yea, children and heirs of everlasting life, a tent, tabernacle, and habitation of God in the Spirit, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of which Jesus Christ Himself

is declared to be the cornerstone (upon which His church is built). . . . 1 Corinthians 12; 1 Peter 2:9; John 3:29; Revelation 19:7; Titus 3:6–7; Ephesians 2:19–21; Matthew 16:18; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Matthew 28:20; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Matthew 7:25.

It seems to me, then, that according to Anabaptist doctrine believed by Jakob Ammann and those who followed him, they believed:

- One sin estranged Adam and Eve from God, and there was nothing that they, their descendants, or anyone else could do could to reconcile them to God.
- God provided a solitary means for man’s reconciliation and salvation: the Son of God, Jesus Christ.
- In Christ alone is salvation, and “we neither may nor must seek salvation in any other.”
- Jesus “obtained forgiveness of sins for all mankind” and became “the cause of eternal salvation for all those who believe in and obey His commandments.”
- God sent messengers to all the world to preach “repentance and remission of sins.” Those who repent have their sins remitted. God has declared that those who “through faith, as obedient children, heed, follow, and practice” His Word to be “His children and lawful heirs.” No one is excluded “from the precious inheritance of eternal salvation” other than those who are unbelieving and thus disobedient. They are “stiff-necked and obdurate” and “despise” God’s offer of forgiveness.
- Neither baptism, taking the Lord’s Supper, attending church, or any outward ceremony can do anything to please God or obtain salvation apart from faith in Christ. One must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, be

regenerated (that is, “born again of God from above”) to be saved. Those who do believe in Jesus “obtain forgiveness of sins, are sanctified, justified, and made children of God,” and they “partake of God’s mind, nature, and image.”

- Through their faith, penitent believers are regenerated, renewed by the Holy Spirit, made “one with God,” and “written in heaven.” They become “the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the bride of Christ, children and heirs of everlasting life” and “a temple of God in the Spirit.”

Do you agree that someone who has (1) truly repented and believed in Christ, (2) believes that Jesus is the only source of salvation, (3) has been forgiven of his sins, (4) has been spiritually born again, (5) has become God’s child and His heir, (6) possesses eternal salvation, (7) has been sanctified and justified, (8) has partaken of God’s mind, nature, and image, (9) is one with God, (10) whose name is written in heaven, (11) is part of the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, and the bride of Christ, and (12) who is a habitation of the Holy Spirit—would not confess that he does not know if God will accept him into heaven when he dies because he is not sure that he has been good enough to earn his place there?

Do you think that if Jakob Ammann were alive today he would be excommunicated and shunned for believing that his name was written in heaven?

I don’t think it is prideful to claim that you are certain that you are going to heaven if you are trusting in Jesus; rather, it is one of the many evidences of true repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Having assurance is the normal true Christian experience. As John wrote, *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the*

Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:13). Jesus said, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life* (John 5:24). If we believe Jesus’s words in John 5:24, could we possibly be only hoping that we will be saved in the end if we are good enough?

If we profess to believe in Jesus but are uncertain if we are going to heaven, it would seem that we have not actually put our trust in Jesus, but are rather putting our trust (actually, our hope) in our own feeble works—a grave error condemned throughout the New Testament, especially in Paul’s letters to the Galatians and Romans.

Although it is not prideful to be confident in Jesus’s promises of salvation to those who believe, it seems prideful to even hope that we are good enough to merit heaven. That is why Paul declared, *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast* (Ephesians 2:8–9). If our works earn our salvation or even contribute to our salvation in some small way, we could boast.

To attempt to earn eternal salvation or to think we could possibly deserve it could be the highest form of idolatry because it sets up self as savior and usurps what only belongs to Christ. It is to point one’s finger at Jesus as He hangs dying on the cross and to say to Him, “What You are doing is not enough! I must add my own goodness!”

Of course, true believers will obey Christ for at least three reasons: First, they believe in Him. *Faith without works is dead* and cannot save (James 2:14–26). Second, they love Him. Jesus said

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that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15, 21). Third, He lives in them (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27). Jesus’s commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3).

Obedying Jesus because you believe in Him, love Him, and have Him living inside of you is entirely different than trying to be good enough to attain salvation.

The original Amish, like the original Swiss Brethren and Mennonites, were evangelistic. They called their unbelieving neighbors to repentance and faith in Jesus, hoping that their neighbors would respond, be born again, and have their names written in heaven. Most, just like Jakob Ammann, were not born Anabaptist, but converted from the state Protestant or Catholic churches—after hearing someone preach the gospel.

If the original Anabaptists had not

proclaimed the gospel to others, Jakob Ammann would never have been converted to Christ because he would have never heard the gospel. We should obey Christ’s command and proclaim the gospel to others, too, and not keep it to ourselves. Do we tell others about Jesus?

So what do you think? Do we believe the Dordrecht Confession of Faith in the same way as our forefathers? Let us be sure that we believe the truth of the Word of God, just as our forefathers did.

Below are some verses cited within the Dordrecht Confession that would be worthwhile for every person to ponder.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

John 20:31 *These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

Galatians 1:8 *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*

Matthew 28:19–20 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

The author of this article, David Miller, resides in Smicksburg, Pennsylvania. If you would like to respectfully and peacefully discuss this article with him, either through written correspondence, a phone conversation, or in person, please feel free to contact him:

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Give Thanks

—By Grace Hofstetter

Another month has come. Have we thanked God for the little things in our life—things like bread to eat, a place to sleep, friends, and family? Have we thought of thanking Him for giving us life and breath? What about salvation? Do we think of the agony He went through, or do we groan within ourselves?

Maybe life didn’t turn out how we expected. Maybe there is sickness in the

family. Maybe we suffered great agony as a child, and healing hasn’t yet come.

I’m waiting for some healing in my life. I have forgiven. Now I am waiting on the Lord to heal me in areas where I know I’m a little raw. You know—like when you go through open-heart surgery or even a minor surgery. Like getting a toe under the lawn mower, quick surgery might fix it, but it still needs healing. I’m writing from experience! Oh, the pain at

the time! Even though the cut is clean and the skin is stitched together, it hurts. But healing will come.

Back to being thankful. I have moments when I groan within myself. Life seems tough at times. Being thankful seems far away from me. That’s when I am reminded to thank the Lord anyway.

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

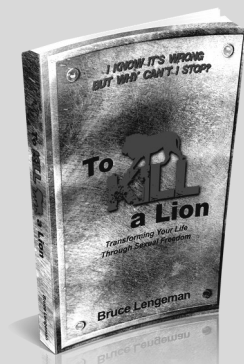
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Why do we care when someone else is hurting, either physically or emotionally? Because there is this thing called Compassion, which simply means Passion for someone else. So what is passion? Passion is “a powerful emotion, usually as in love or hate.”

We care because we “feel” the pain of another. We are able to feel their pain/ have compassion for them, because in the past we have also experienced pain. The closer their experience is to our past experience, the more compassion we will have for them. This is the reason God many times calls people to minister to other people who struggle with the same things He delivered them from, because they can feel what is being felt by the other person, which causes them to care.

All of us want someone to care when we are hurting. And we all want to be that caring person, because everyone likes compassion. Remember what produces compassion? Our past hurts. So next time someone hurts you by what they say or do, instead of getting angry at them, praise God for the experience and ask Him to forgive them. Remember what it

says in Romans 8:28? *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

You see, when we love God and turn to Him with our hurts, giving them to Him and asking Him to heal us, and then forgiving the abuser like He told us to, we get to grow into a more compassionate person. God gets to take what Satan intended to harm us with and make something beautiful come out of it.

But when we don't, we continue to carry that hurt in our heart, which, like a physical hurt that isn't taken care of, starts to get infected after a while. If we keep pushing it out of our mind instead of giving it to Jesus and letting Him heal it, it might grow a skin over it and even appear like it's healed; but underneath, an abscess starts to form, and the longer it is left there, the more vile the infection will become, until finally it turns into bitterness, and eventually to hatred.

If we take this route, we will soon become the abusers, because every time someone says or does something that reminds us of our hurt, the same thing

happens as when someone pokes that infected and festering wound. We lash out at them in anger because of the pain. “Hurt people hurt people.”

So the next time someone hurts you, remember why they hurt you: because someone hurt them in the past, and they chose to carry that hurt instead of giving it to God and allowing Him to work it out into compassion. Also remember that depending on which way you deal with your hurt will determine whether you will become more compassionate or will become enslaved by bitterness.

If God has shown you compassion and delivered you from a painful situation, show some compassion to others who are still struggling. Take the time to sit and listen to them. After listening, if circumstances allow, don't be ashamed to share your story and how God helped you through it. There are hordes of people who just need to know that someone cares. So be compassionate and share some hope today! Always remember: People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Choose compassion!

End

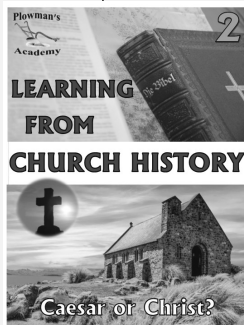


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And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. (Genesis 13:14–15)

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. (Romans 11:25–27)

Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord. (Jeremiah 31:35–37)

It is true that many people today consider God's promises to the Jews to be obsolete



and invalid. This seemingly is a deeply established thought among us Anabaptists of today—one that I personally believed in for many years. As the Lord began opening my eyes to the thought that He indeed had not yet forsaken Israel, His “firstborn” (Exodus 4:22), it caused a severe paradigm shift within my heart. I also discovered that there is a certain shame attached when one accepts the Jews as yet being God's people.

To the contrary, the Palestinians in the “West Bank” are well accepted and supported by some mainline Mennonites, and that certainly has its merits in helping the poor.

However, the perpetual hatred for the Jews that has marked their entire history should not be found among us non-resistant Anabaptists, for they still bear the root, while we as a wild olive branch have been grafted in (Romans 11:17–21). We need to remember that Paul was a Jew. He understood that once the Gentile age would be fulfilled, God would once again turn back to the Jews, the beloved

seed of Abraham.

The question arises, Why is Israel the center of attention today throughout the globe? What is it about her that grips the heart of the nations? Most want to see them annihilated and done away with for whatever reason.

There can be but one logical reason for such animosity: God the Father has not forsaken His promise to Abraham. He will yet, in fulfillment of time, bless His seed. We should remember that this is God's plan—a plan that will override every other human thought or authority—a plan that has its roots deep within God's Word—a plan that will bring into fulfillment God's historical design for both Jew and Gentile, which is why the gates of hell stops at nothing in the attempt to abort this divine eternal plan.

You and I were given the grand opportunity to be alive today and to be incorporated in God's unfolding end-time scenario. If we can but fathom God's heart in the matter—we will come alongside His plan. Deep biblical and spiritual discernment is required if we are to succeed in our spiritual journey with Him today. To take offense of the Jews, is to take offense of God. There was a time when I revolted against such a thought. Even so, the day has come; God is revealing Himself like no other time in history. Bless His name!

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If you’ve been following my last few posts, you’ve probably noticed that I’ve been writing a lot about sexual abuse. Maybe you’re wondering why.

A few weeks ago, I found myself asking “Why?” What is the real motive behind my writing about sexual abuse? Suddenly, I felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to write. So I sat down and wrote. Within a few minutes, a poem was formed.

The Little Girl*

Once there was a little girl,
With pure and childlike trust.
But one day this girl became
An object of one’s lust.

He told her she was pretty;
That what he did was love.
How that must have hurt the heart
Of God in heaven above!

The little girl believed him.
Even though this “love” hurt.
It made her feel so yucky,
And like a piece of dirt.

The pain became unbearable.
She blocked it from her mind.
It lay there many years until
Jesus she did find.

He beckoned her to come to Him.
She came with shame and fears.

Her dress was dirty and torn;
Her eyes were filled with tears.

“May I carry all your pain?”
His voice so gently said.
“I’ve been waiting all these years.
It was for you I bled.”

She began to cry great heaving sobs.
Her chest hurt with the pain.
She lifted her eyes to His
And saw they held no blame.

“Yes, I’ll give it all to You,”
She uttered in reply.
And so He lifted all the pain.
She felt like she could fly.

“This is for you,” He said with love.
And handed her a dress.
“This is what I think of you—
Pure, clean, and spotless.”

And so the little girl did dance
While Jesus held her hand.
And happy circles they did make
Their feet upon the sand.

I know this little girl quite well.
This little girl is me.
Redeemer, Saviour, Healer, Friend –
For you, He’ll gladly be.

This is my “why.”

I cannot be silent about the redemption my Savior has brought me. I refuse to stifle His glory by being quiet when He, in His mercy, touched my shattered heart and literally healed my broken body, soul, and spirit.

I realize that sexual abuse is a subject that is not culturally acceptable to talk about in some Anabaptist circles. This saddens me, because there are so many people who, like me, carry horrible secrets with them for years and have no idea how to rid themselves of them. So

they struggle. They cover them up and try to forget; but it doesn’t work.

It never does. I’ve been there, and it’s not a fun place to be.

Just a few short years ago, I felt like no one knew how to help me find peace and healing. I wondered if I was just a hopeless case.

And then I met Jesus. He changed everything—not in one day, because He is still healing me. Has the journey been easy? No. Is it worth the pain? Yes. A thousand times—yes!

Do I understand or know why I was abused and raped? No. God never answered Job’s questions of “why” either.

But there’s one thing I am choosing to believe: God has a purpose for everything—even for a little girl who was brutally abused at the hands of men who professed to be sons of God.

I don’t know exactly why it happened to me. My husband reminds me often: “Ann, God doesn’t waste pain.” Sometimes God uses pain to help others find healing.

And so I want to be a voice for those little boys and girls who find themselves wondering if they are hopeless cases. My heart aches for them. I long to take their hand and lead them to the foot of the cross to meet my Friend, Jesus.

The truth is, no one is exempt from needing Jesus and His redemption in their lives.

Brothers and sisters, this, and this only, is my “why.”

*This poem is dedicated to my dear husband, Ben. Thank you, Sweetheart, for leading me to Jesus, helping me forgive, and showing me over and over what love really is. I love you and I trust you.

End

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Life Matters

—Harvey Seidel

Following the recent decision of the lawmakers of New York to allow more abortions, God has laid a burden on my heart for us to consider. I am writing this as a challenge to think about what is happening in America.

As we read and study the Bible, we see that the nation of Israel continued to decline as they worshipped idols. Even when Moses was on the mountain getting the Ten Commandments, the people of Israel made a golden calf and were worshipping it.

This tendency to worship idols was always their downfall. They would start out worshipping God, but then because of the nations around them that were involved in idol worship, they would embrace the pagan gods of their neighbors. After God would withdraw His blessings, the Israelites would turn back to Him.

Under some of the kings, the idols and groves and places of false worship would be destroyed, and God would again give His blessings. Israel never learned, though. She would again and again embrace the idol worship of pagan neighboring tribes, and once again, God would withhold His blessings from His people.

God said in the First Commandment, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* In the Second Commandment, God said, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image [idol]* (Exodus 20:3–4).



One of the many gods that influenced the people of Israel was the god Molech. Of all the pagan gods, this one was the worst. Molech was a god who demanded the sacrifice of children. As horrible as it was, other nations in the land sacrificed their children in the fires of Molech. Israel also was guilty of this.

The book of Leviticus condemns this, and God's penalty for an Israelite sacrificing a child to the pagan god Molech was death. Prophets of the Old Testament condemned this practice and warned the nation of Israel of the devastation that would come because of this horrible practice.

America has been sacrificing her children to the god Molech now for many years. His new name is "Abortion." With the devastating decision that the state of New York has made allowing abortion up to full-term, we now see very plainly this dark sin of worship to the god Molech. Other states, such as Illinois, also recently passed laws promoting more abortions.

Call it what you will, it is nothing more than sacrificing our children to this pagan abomination called Moloch. The worship of the abortion god has reached new heights in America. We no longer weep in shame over abortion, but rather, many people celebrate the victory they now have to worship this pagan god to the fullest extent, giving their children, full-term babies, to the horrible paganism of Molech.

We should cry to the Lord of heaven for forgiveness and beg Him to cleanse our land. America, we are about to feel the wrath of almighty God on what we have allowed in this land. I believe that New York is going to reap the whirlwind of devastation because of allowing this. Those who support abortion—realize that you are worshipping Molech.

End