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The Secret of the Strength

— by Peter Hoover

CHAPTER 4

From Where Did the Anabaptists Come?

They came from "no where." Right out of the Dark Ages, out of incredibly corrupt state churches, the Anabaptists (Ludwig Keller and E. H. Broadbent, notwithstanding) stepped as a totally new and different movement.

Were they somehow connected to the first Christians?

No, they were not. The early Christians were Jewish, Greek, or Latin people in flowing robes. The Anabaptists were north Europeans in black hats and broadfall trousers.

The Anabaptists, although they respected the early Christians, made no attempt to "reproduce" them exactly. A thousand miles and a thousand years apart, they had little in common except the New Testament *and the secret of the great strength*.

Once this became clear to me, I started seeing things in history:

Jewish Christians

After Pentecost, Jews from Parthia,

Media, Elam, Babylon, Cappadocia, and other places joined the Jews of Judaea who believed in Christ. Jewish Christians, all of whom could trace their ancestry back to Abraham, were circumcised and wore beards. They ate Kosher foods and kept the Sabbath holy, but they followed Christ. Christianity soon broke out of the bounds of Judaism.

Greek Christians

After Paul's conversion and Peter's visit to Cornelius, hundreds and eventually thousands of Greeks from all over Alexander's former realm—Greek merchants and lawyers, Greek doctors, educated Greeks, Greeks given to profound thought, athletic Greeks, Greeks used to idolatry and total abandon to immorality, Greek masters and slaves—repented, believed, and got baptized. They followed Christ, and it wasn't long until Christianity was predominantly Greek, centered in Hellenistic Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor. Paul wrote his letters in Greek and the rest of the New Testament, if not originally conceived in that language, was soon known only in Greek texts.

Greek, the "world language" and "world culture" of the times, gave the

Christians a place on the cutting edge of current events. But Christianity soon broke out of the bounds of a Greek world.

Latin Christians

With the decline of Greek influence in the western part of the empire, Latin Rome came into its own. Jews from Rome witnessed the birth of Christianity in Jerusalem. Perhaps it was they, or other early missionaries who carried it to Latin, Italy, and northern Africa. Whatever the case, it wasn't long until thousands of clear-thinking Latins, Europeans at heart, and like the Greeks, uncircumcised, had joined the Jews and the Greeks in following Christ.

From these Latin Christians centered at Carthage and Rome, came such inspired thinkers as the bishop Clement of Rome, Mark Felix, and Tertullian. Latin Christians carried the Gospel throughout the far reaches of the Roman Empire: to the Celts in Britain and Ireland, to Iberia (Spain and Portugal), to the Gauls in what later became France, and to Celtic tribes living in the Alps and down the Danube Valley. But Christianity soon broke out of the bounds of the Roman Empire.

German Christians

As early as 1800 B.C. (about the time Jacob fled to Padan-Aram), small bands of families had found their way from Mesopotamia and the Indus valley north through Persia and the Ukraine, through central Europe to the shores of the North Sea. There, they called themselves *Teutsch* (German).

The Germans lived a wild life, planting few crops and hunting to make up the slack. The "Indians of Europe," they thrived in cold forests and wetlands along the sea. They grew rapidly in number, pushing ever southward until they inhabited the Black Forest and the mountains of Swabia. They pushed north (the Vikings) to occupy Scandinavia, west into England, east into Russia, and eventually south into Italy and Asia Minor.

These German raiders had no taste for Latin or Greek culture. They smashed temples, slaughtered ruthlessly, and took children along with their spoil. Through this practice, they unwittingly brought home something that changed their ways forever.

On a raid to the south, around the time of Constantine the Great, German tribesmen kidnapped a Cappadocian boy named Ulfilas. He believed in Christ.

Unlike most captives before him, Ulfilas did not lose himself in barbarian ways. Carried north through the Balkan mountains, he crossed the Danube river with his captors and found himself outside of the Roman Empire—in the wilds with a wild people, but he did not lose heart. He learned German and began to tell his captors about Christ. Long blond hair falling around their fur-clad shoulders, rough men with beards and hefty women sitting around campfires listened to him, fascinated. Their hearts respond-

ed to the story of Christ. One by one they believed, repented of their sins, and began to follow Christ themselves.

Ulfilas baptized them in water. Before long, a nucleus of Christians developed among the wild people north of the Danube. Ulfilas, using the Greek and Latin he knew, invented for them a German alphabet. He taught them how to read and translated first the Gospels, then the letters of Paul, and finally most of the Old Testament into German.

In 341 AD, Ulfilas travelled south to his homeland in "civilized" Asia. In Nicomedia, the city where an old bishop, Eusebius, lived, he told of the Germans who had turned to following Christ. Eusebius ordained Ulfilas to be an apostle to the Germans.

The Germans Become Catholic

Ulfilas' s Christian movement did not survive. Already during his lifetime, the Latin and Greek Christians of the south had become powerful. What they believed became almost like a national religion under Constantine the Great. Constantine tried to unite all Christians under one great church organization that would cooperate with the Roman government. He called councils to draw up rules and define catholic (universally accepted as genuine) doctrine. In the process of these councils, Ulfilas and the German Christians became classed officially as heretics.

Ulfilas taught that Christ was the Son of God, but not exactly like God the Father in every respect. He taught that the Holy Spirit was subordinate to God. In short, Ulfilas preached a Christianity as he knew it before the councils of Constantine. But now it was no longer considered "catholic."

The new "catholic" Christianity first reached the Germans by way of a

man called Remigius. Remigius was a Latin youth who loved to study and spoke well. At the age of twenty-two, he became bishop of the catholic congregation at Reims in what is now France.

During Remigius' time, many Germans followed a ruthless chief called Clovis who had a Christian wife. Clovis came to know Remigius and his little church at Reims but he did not care for Christianity. He ignored Remigius' frequent attempts to "convert" him until two things happened to change his mind: His son got sick and was healed, and he won a great victory over his rivals at Zulpich, after praying (as a last resort) to the Christians' God. Then Clovis wanted to get baptized.

Clovis hurried to Reims and had Remigius baptize him, his warrior chiefs, and more than three thousand of his soldiers at once. "Catholic" churches then sprang up all over Clovis' domain. Tribe after tribe of the remaining Germans fell before his "Christian" sword, and thousands were baptized en masse. Missionaries followed (and in some places preceded) the army in its task of conversion. Gall of Down, an Irish Catholic missionary, reached Switzerland in 612. He built a mission at Sankt Gallen. Boniface (Wynfrith of Wessex) followed him in 716, baptizing thousands more—both pagans and those who had belonged to what was left of Ulfilas's "uncatholic" congregations. By doing this, Boniface cleaned up what he called a "haphazard Christianity" propagated by "heretical and free living clerics."

Boniface anointed a German chief, Pepin the Short, to rule over all his German converts. Then, to be sure that Pepin's rule would be "catholic," Boniface led him to be crowned by bishop Stephen of Rome.

The Church of the Dark Ages

Pepin the Short had one outstanding

son named Karl, later known as **Karl der Große** — Charlemagne. Karl grew up speaking old High German, a language similar to the Pennsylvania Dutch of today's Amish. He was baptized in the "catholic" Christian church and loved to fight. When he became king, he resolved to convert and civilize all of the remaining "Indians of Europe": the German tribes east of the Rhine River.

Karl fought and baptized valiantly. He meant business. But his converts never understood him like they had understood Ulfilas. They could not read the Latin New Testament with which he forcefully replaced Ulfilas's German translations. The converts said the Lord's Prayer in Latin (law demanded it), but they did not know what it meant. They accepted the sprinkling of baptism, but it looked to them like a magical rite. They ate the sacred bread, but they did not get the mumblings of the priests who consecrated it with words that sounded like "hocus pocus." In Saxony, where some Germans had second thoughts about accepting these "catholic" traditions, Karl had four thousand, five hundred, massacred in one day. He made his point.

Then, in November, 800 AD, Karl, the German chieftain, visited his friend Leo, the bishop of Rome. At this time the bishop of Rome was still under the oversight of the Greek church at Byzantium, but he was unhappy. Leo and Karl got to discussing things and came up with a great idea.

On Christmas day, both Karl and Leo entered St. Peter's Church in the middle of town. Thousands of people had come for the Christmas service. The festive atmosphere was exactly right for Leo to anoint and crown Karl as a new Roman Emperor (Charlemagne) and for Karl to take Leo as his religious head of state.

A Christian empire! A *Holy, Roman, Empire!* Bishop and warrior, church and state became one on Christmas day 800 AD, and a split between the old *Greek* Catholic Church and the new *Roman* Catholic Church became inevitable. Karl felt good with his new role as Roman Emperor, even though he modestly confessed that if he had known what Leo was going to do, he never would have set foot in St. Peter's Church. Leo, at the same time, exulted in his liberation from Byzantium and forged a document to prove that Constantine had always wanted the Bishop of Rome to be the head of Christendom.

The wedding of the Holy Roman Empire to the Roman Catholic Church, on Christmas Day, 800 AD, drew the curtain of the Dark Ages securely down on Europe.

The Christian movement among the Jews had been glorious. Among the Greeks, yet more so. Latin Christians had carried the Gospel west and north. Many Germans had gotten converted. But now, this Christianity of the Dark Ages swallowed everything up and was worse than no Christianity at all. It was the wolf of north European barbarianism decked in the sheep's clothing of Christ's Gospel. What a potent disguise! The church of the Dark Ages might well have been the end of Christianity—had it not been for its preservation of the New Testament.

Anabaptist Christians

Fortunately, not all German converts to Roman Catholicism were totally given to hunting wild pigs and drinking beer. The church, corrupt as it may have been, succeeded in drawing young Germans into religious life (monasteries and convents). There they learned to read Latin, and there a few of them came across the New

Testament in the early 1500's.

Here a German monk (Martin Luther of Wittenberg), there a German priest (Menno Simons of Witmarsum), here and there and everywhere, with the invention of the printing press, educated Germans began to read with alarm the words of Christ and the Apostles. Suddenly they realized that they had been short-changed by the missionaries who had "converted" them. Suddenly it became clear to them that they had been Christians for a thousand years without ever knowing Christianity at all! Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, Balthasar Hubmaier, Hans Denck, Michael Sattler, and Pilgram Marpeck—German after German rose to the challenge of the outrage. Powerful tracts, Latin tracts at first, but soon German tracts and German translations of the New Testament, swept the entire German populace, from Switzerland to the North Sea and from Scandinavia to East Prussia, into flame. The church of the Dark Ages had totally underestimated the effect that the New Testament could have on an ignorant population.



Johannes Gutenberg, working in the German cities of Strasbourg and Mainz, contributed greatly to the spread of published materials, through his invention of movable type, and printing the entire Bible (in Latin) in 1455. Within a century of his time all of Europe was flooded with printed literature—Bibles and spiritual writings (including thousands of Anabaptist writings) among them, but not all of them for the good.

No longer could the Germans be controlled. No more could they be hood-

winked into believing fantastic stories about the virgin, the saints, baptism, and the mass. Once the Bible was printed and the Germans had it in their hands, the dark days of the apostate "catholic" church in northern Europe were over.

Luther did not go all the way. Neither did Zwingli. But just a few years after the New Testament hit the German world, more than a hundred thousand Germans pressed all the way through to Christ and broke out of the Dark Ages. Because they followed Christ's example and baptized adults, people called them *Anabaptists* (rebaptizers). In this book, you may meet them and consider what they wrote.

CHAPTER 5 Literarily... An Explosion!

Conrad Grebel, a young Anabaptist, wrote on September 3, 1524:

*"I am full of words and the spirit of my belly constrains me. Behold my belly is as new wine without a vent, which bursts the wineskins. I shall speak and I shall breathe a little more freely: I shall open my lips and make answer."*¹

Hans Denck, a widely-travelled Anabaptist messenger from southern Germany, wrote:

"I open my mouth against my will. I speak reluctantly about God, but He compels me to speak so I cannot be silent.... Some brothers think they have utterly explored the gospel, and whoever does not agree with everything they say must be a heretic. Should one wish to give

*an account of one's faith to those who desire it, then they say that one causes discord and tumult among the people. If one ignores the wrong things they say, they insist that one shrinks from the light. Very well, let God draw me out of my corner then, and I will say what is on my mind. Whether it will do any good, only God knows. For there are many who ask for the truth, but few who like to hear it."*²

Fortunately, Conrad Grebel, Hans Denck, and other Anabaptists, did not stay silent. They did more than just speak. They wrote. From the beginning of the movement, their writings shook the populace. Roman Catholics burned them. Luther cursed them. Zwingli and Bullinger wrote scathing replies. Practically all European governments made the publication, distribution, and the ownership of Anabaptist writings a capital offence. But they survive to speak today.

The Anabaptist Writings

Unlike the writings of the first Christians, which survive only in rare manuscripts and in limited quantity, the writings of the Anabaptists survive in amazing abundance, and more are coming to light all the time. When Roman Catholic authorities ransacked the Anabaptist communities of Moravia and drove the brothers away, they hauled off wagon loads of handwritten books. Many of them survive, even after World War II, and are being discovered in the libraries and church archives of Europe.

The difficulty in preparing this book was not in finding material to use, but in deciding what not to use.

Without constant effort and many deletions, this book could have grown to the size of the *Martyrs Mirror* and the *Aelteste Chronik* combined, but it was deliberately kept brief! This, regrettably, required the use of fragments and abbreviated passages. Those who can do so are urged to read these writings in their original languages and in their context if possible.

Spontaneous Literature

"How did they do it?" I have asked myself time after time. Out of money, driven from their homes, when paper was scarce, ink expensive, and the publishing of their books was a mortal risk, the Anabaptists produced thousands upon thousands of books for free distribution!



Anabaptist writers and publishers used printing presses where possible. But printing, in the sixteenth century, continued to be a costly, time-consuming affair. Copying writings by hand was much simpler, even though it did not allow for as wide a distribution of the finished product. This page from the Hutterite *Gross-Geschichtsbuch*, first written on vellum during the 1500s and recopied many times, is an example of what came from the *Schreibstuben* (scriptoriums, writing rooms) of the believers in Moravia. Young men and women, working under gifted teachers like Hauptrecht Zapf, reproduced thousands of writings, some of them surviving in European libraries and in Anabaptist communities today.

The only thing I can see is that God helped them.

The first Anabaptists had no central organization. For the most part (outside of Moravia) They had no publishing houses nor editorial committees. Their earliest writings were

¹ Job 32:18-20, quoted in a letter of September 3, 1524, to Joachim von Watt (Vadian).

² From *Was Geredt Sey*, published at Augsburg in 1526.

nothing but the spontaneous efforts of individuals here and there, many of them in jail. Their originality shows in poetry that doesn't quite rhyme, Scriptures quoted by memory, words and names written in a vast variety of German dialectic spellings and misspellings, a lack of punctuation, and in many cases a lack of style or form. But God spoke through their literature and it moved Europe.

In this book you will often read what "the Anabaptists said" or "the Anabaptists believed." Such statements, in light of the spontaneity of my sources cannot be taken as all-inclusive absolutes. The Anabaptists shared the secret of the strength of their movement, but many of them did not share the beliefs of the majority in every area.

A Word of Caution

You will, in fact, almost certainly disagree with some things the Anabaptists said and believed. If you are a descendant of the Anabaptists themselves, you may feel disappointed and unsettled (I did). You may be sorely tempted to doubt my sources, to write off the men I quote as "unsound" or "marginal" characters, or simply to dismiss this book by saying: "Well, the Anabaptists were off on some things too."

They probably were. But I encourage you not to react like my friend from Pennsylvania did. Several years ago I wrote a paper on threefold baptism as taught by the Anabaptists. The night after I gave him the paper I was startled to suddenly have him knocking on my door. Because he lived a good distance away, my first thought was that something terrible must have happened. He looked disheveled and excited. "Peter!" he exclaimed as he burst through the door. "I read your paper and just had to come to talk things over. What is going on?"

"Did you read the whole paper?" I asked him.

"No," he confessed. "I didn't get past the first paragraph where you spoke of being buried in baptism. I thought it sounded like you were going off track and teaching immersion. . . ."

I understood my friend's concern. I grew up like he did. But our Anabaptist forefathers could not have understood it at all, and this book, which consists largely of what they wrote, reflects their insensitivity to our doctrinal touchiness.

My prayer is that such "details" in this book will not divert your attention from its theme. My prayer is that you will find your way through the superficial, the transient, and that which you did not expect, to get your hands on the truth behind the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century. If that can happen, and if a light comes on in your heart as a result, I shall feel amply rewarded for having prepared this book in the English language.

A Word on Anabaptist Research

Knowing what the Anabaptists taught is not enough. Thousands, nowadays, both know what they taught and are able to expound on it at length, but their lifestyle remains unchanged.

This book is written with a general distrust of Anabaptist scholars who do not live in an "Anabaptist" (radically non-conformed) way. It is written with little sympathy or appreciation for the conclusions of most modern-day Anabaptists. What can those who have gone the way of the world in education, in economics, in dress, and in entertainment contribute to the understanding of what was believed by their forefathers in the sixteenth century?

Can a man describe the inner feelings of a woman?

How can those who have isolated themselves in culturally elite, rural communities in North America, or those who have become wealthy property owners and businessmen, identify with the Anabaptists who were often at the bottom of the working class, landless, and city dwellers?

This book is written with the premise that only those who choose the life which the Anabaptists chose will in the end discover what they thought and believed.

Anabaptist Quotations in This Book

Most twentieth-century Christians do not know Anabaptist writings because they cannot read them. The Anabaptists wrote in a variety of German dialects. ("Standard High German" had not yet become a standard in their day.) Some of their important writings have never been translated into English. Those that have been translated are in some cases hard to read because of the cumbersome English used to portray German thoughts. (How, for instance, do you best translate such graphic terms as *untergeworfen*, *angestrengt*, or *einverleibt*?)

In this book I have tried to make the Anabaptists as readable as possible without altering the sense of their statements. I have used some English translations (such as Leonard Verduin's excellent one of Menno Simons' writings), but even in them I have changed some terms back to correspond more exactly with their German originals (such as "teachings" instead of "doctrine" for the German word *Lehre*, and "nighttime meal" instead of "communion" for *Nachtmal*). I have tried to express original German ideas as accurately as possible. Because of this I favored the use of standard German above English translations, the gap between standard and dialectic German

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There are many warnings and admonitions against emotionalism in worship today. Much is said against people thinking they must experience some emotion during worship to truly have a worship experience. And there is truth in this.

But the opposite extreme are the people who think no emotion should be shown during worship times. Any emotion shown is viewed as fake, or simply an attempt to draw attention to oneself.

I have been part of Anabaptist churches all my life. I have seen Amish, Beachy, Eastern Mennonite, and Conservative Mennonite church services, and the one thing that always stayed consistent was sitting still and somber during church services. I don't recall ever feeling emotional during our "worship songs." I don't remember seeing others in the congregation showing much emotion during worship, neither do I recall any longings on my part to show any. The few times that certain people raised a hand in worship, it drew the attention of everyone around them. I remember thinking that I would never do that because I wouldn't want everyone to stare at me.



"I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting"

1 Timothy 2:8

I learned immense amounts of biblical knowledge and application during church, and I don't regret any of that. Quiet, non-emotional churches often

seem to excel in this area. However, now that I'm older, I have wished that I would have learned that feeling, and that showing emotion is okay during worship as well.

Is it possible to learn both?

Feeling Emotions—good or bad?

Is it wrong to want an emotional experience during worship? Is it wrong to feel overcome by emotions during worship and to show it? Does God care about what our emotional state is when we worship Him? Would He rather that we would not act emotional?

These are all questions that I have been working through in the past few years.

In Ephesians 5, the relationship between husbands and wives is compared to Christ and His church. That made my mind go to marital emotions. When we are first married and in the honeymoon stage, emotions are crazily wild and passionate. There is no attempt to suppress how we feel for each other, and we both feel and show strong emotions with abandon.

Through the years, those emotions level out a bit and we tend to be less emotional but love more deeply. But still, deep within, there is often a longing to feel those wildly crazy, passionate emotions and get lost with each other. Is it wrong to desire or pursue that?

That desire can lead to pursuing a deeper intimacy with each other, or it can lead to wanting just the experience itself so much that it leads us into temptation and sin. In other words, the desire itself is not wrong, but what you do with that desire can be. If we allow that desire to become an obsession and an idol, it can lead to false intimacy, such as pornography or affairs.

Pursuing that desire in a legitimate way would mean that you pursue the person,

not the experience. That might be candlelight dinners, soft music, slow dancing, reminiscing together, or whatever is a special time for each couple. Rarely would someone try to claim that enjoying an emotional intimacy together as a couple is wrong.

Does it always happen the way we think it should? Does it always look the same?

Sometimes we go through the motions and feel nothing. Does that mean we give up on the relationship or the pursuit of that emotional connection with each other? It shouldn't!

Could we not also apply some of these same principles to our relationship with God? Have you ever been overcome with emotions during worship, whether at home or in public? Is it wrong to want to feel emotions in worship?

Maybe the same rule could apply...If the desire causes us to pursue a deeper intimacy with God, rather than just pursuing the emotional experience, it can be a good thing. If we allow the desire to become an obsession for just an experience we want to have again, rather than pursuing the One we wish to experience it with, it could lead to sin.

Does that mean we will always experience deep emotions during worship?

No, but that doesn't mean it is wrong to desire it. When I don't feel emotions during worship, does that mean I'm doing something wrong or that I should just not bother worshipping? Just as there are times in marriage when you just don't feel the strong emotions, it doesn't mean you aren't "in love" or that you should stop showing love.

Showing Emotions

If desiring and experiencing deep emotions during a worship time with God is not wrong, what about *showing* emo-

tions? There are those within my Anabaptist heritage that would say it is wrong because all emotions should be kept in check and under control.

Again, my mind goes to the marital relationship. If a spouse never lets emotions show and very woodenly keeps herself/himself in check while methodically going through the motions of showing love, it steals the joy right out of the moment.

There is something about knowing that the one you love is crazy about you and loses all inhibitions when you are together. Proverbs 5:18-19 speaks of men who “rejoice with the wife of thy youth” and it goes on to say he should be “ravished” or “intoxicated” in her love.

Wild, intense emotions of joy and pleasure are not wrong when they are within God-given relationships. They are a beautiful gift from God.

Does God expect or want us to quench emotions we may feel when we are in His Presence? The psalmist speaks of there being “fullness of joy” in His Presence and “pleasures forevermore” at His right hand. (Ps.16:11)

1 Thess. 2:19 says, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?”

1 Peter 1:8, “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

If what we feel while in His Presence is Him evoking in us fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore, why should we quench those feelings or refuse to show them? Aren’t we warned in 1 Thess. 5:19 that we should not “quench the Spirit”?

Have you ever sat in a somber assembly and sang “It is joy unspeakable and full of glory, full of glory, full of glo-

ry...” wondering all the while why everyone is so expressionless and subdued? I have. And I’ve wondered what God’s response is?

Should an emotional response be reserved for only times of private worship?

Some people have never felt an emotional response during church or in their personal quiet time. If your quiet time consists of praying only for needs and wants, and you don’t enter His Presence or understand what “being in the Presence of God” is, you won’t feel “fullness of joy” or understand what it really means.

And if you don’t experience it in your quiet time with God, I doubt you are truly experiencing it while in the assembly of believers either.

If you often are overcome by emotions during your quiet time because you feel the touch of God upon you, it’s no surprise that you feel those same emotions while worshipping with other believers and God’s Presence is strongly felt. Why would you quench those feelings or try to hold back? We were made to worship Him in solitary worship, but also in solidarity with fellow believers while we worship in an assembly. We are one body, why can we not show an emotional response together to our bridegroom?

Psalms 111:1-2 says, “I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.”

In Luke 19:37 it says “...the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen.”

If you keep reading, you find the Pharisees asking Jesus to rebuke His disciples and He says, “If these should hold

their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”

There are times God expects rejoicing and praising in a loud voice—with your whole heart!

Does God have or show emotions?

We are made to be image bearers of God. Sin has tainted the reflection that we give, but Jesus tells us in Matt. 18:3 that we need to convert and become “as little children” and says “of such is the kingdom of God” in Matt. 19:14. Have you ever noticed that children do not hold back their emotions? They don’t hide what they are feeling.

Could it be that they are more of a true image bearer in this area than we are as adults?

In the Old Testament, God shows emotions to His people. He shows when He is jealous, when He rejoices over His people, when He is overcome by love, etc., through the words He sends by His prophets.

In Zephaniah 3:17, it says, “*The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.*”

That doesn’t sound somber or like a non-emotional relationship to me.

Jesus said that if we see Him, we see the Father. Did Jesus show emotions? I’m remembering Jesus weeping when Lazarus died, and weeping when He prophesied about the fall of Jerusalem. Over and over we read, “And Jesus, moved with compassion...” followed by a miracle. He showed anger in the temple and spent His last night with His disciples telling them of the joy that would follow the sorrow they would soon be feeling.

God is not against emotion. He feels emotions, shows emotions, and speaks of emotions. Why do we feel that we must quell them?

Judgment of others

I have seen a harsh reaction from those of our Anabaptist heritage towards people who show emotions of any kind during worship. There is scorn and even contempt at times written on faces and they are spoken of in disdainful whispers.

This can put a hesitancy in us to worship freely. Perhaps we have once been one of those scornful people.

David was someone that worshipped freely and joyfully. The Psalms show many of the emotions he felt. In 2 Samuel 6, there is an account of him being so excited about the ark of the covenant (the Presence of God!) being brought into the city of David that he danced before the Lord with all his might. And not only David rejoiced—it also says that *“David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet”* (2 Samuel 6:15).

And Michal, Saul’s daughter saw him *“leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart”* (2 Samuel 6:16). She spoke scornfully to

him when he came home and her consequence for this reviling of his worship was being childless all her life.

God didn’t approve of her scornful judgement.

In Luke 7, there is an account of a woman who weeps as she stands by Jesus, washes His feet with her tears, then wipes them with her hair. She then kisses His feet and anoints them with perfumed oil. Does that sound emotional? There is no doubt what her emotional state is here.

The Pharisee, in whose house they were in, didn’t say what he thought out loud—and yet Jesus answered him in rebuke, defending her actions for all to hear.

Jesus did not approve of even silent scornful judgment.

In Matt. 26 and in Mark 14, there is another account of a woman who poured expensive perfume on His head. When the disciples voiced their disapproval, Jesus rebuked them and said this woman would always be remembered for what she had done.

Scorning the emotionally charged ac-

tivities of those acting out of love and worship of God garners rebuke from Him. Scorn is never a positive quality in a person—much less when it is shown to someone who is openly worshipping God in love.

Ask for it

What if you genuinely don’t feel emotional during worship? What do you do if the desire is there for that experience, but you’ve never encountered God in such a way?

Ask Him for it.

James 4:2 says *“ye have not, because ye ask not.”* If you feel fearful or unsure about it, remember the lesson Jesus taught in Luke 11:13. *“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”*

When it comes to worship and deepening the relationship that we have with Him, He is not going to give us an evil gift when we ask for something He already desires in us.

Just ask Him.

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Continued from Page 5...The Secret of the Strength

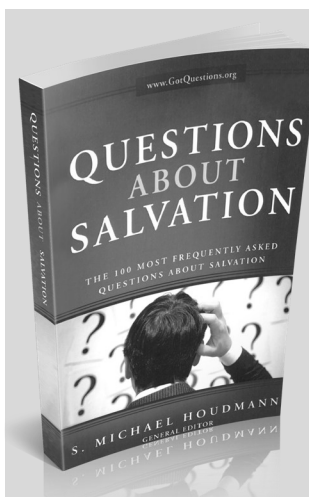
(or Dutch) being much smaller than the gap between those dialects and English.

Those acquainted with Anabaptist writings will notice that I have, in some cases, broken up or abbreviated quotations for the sake of readability and brevity. In all such cases, I refer readers to the original works or their competent translations for the full text.

References are given to original Anabaptist works, which were my sources, whenever possible, for the quotations used in this book. Of these you may find many translations, both fragmentary and complete, in standard High German and English. A good way to locate them is by searching in scholarly Anabaptist bibliographies in Mennonite college libraries.

This book itself is not a scholarly work. It is not a reference book. Its translations are rough, fragmentary and incomplete, but I pray that the Spirit who moved the Anabaptist writers will move and lead those who read this book.

END



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There is a lot of confusion amongst professing Christians concerning our need to confess our sins and what it will accomplish.

I was taught that it is our confessing of sins to the church that puts us in a right standing with God. Later, I had more teaching and I believed that it is our confessing of sins to God that gives us salvation. Only later in my life did I understand that both of my understandings were in error. Let me explain.

Salvation, the process of a person being transformed from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God, does not happen because sins were confessed. It happens only when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. When we believe, we are born again—or some people use the term we are saved.

Repentance, which means a change of mind that brings a change of direction, is a vital part of being saved, or being born again. When believing and repentance takes place in a person's life, that person is born again and they are saved. If they die, they will go to heaven. God

has promised and assured us of that in his holy Word.

So, what about our sins? What sins? You see, when we believe in Jesus He forgives us our sins, but He also saves us from our sins. God said that He remembers our sins no more. He has given us a clean slate. Here many people make a huge mistake. They feel like they must dwell on their past sins and make a big deal of confessing and repenting, when that time should be spent in praising and rejoicing that their sins have been washed away. Praise God!

The prodigal son started to confess, but the father would have none of it. He said the son had repented (came home), and that called for rejoicing.

So, does a believer never need to confess their sins? Yes, after we are saved we all fail at times. Some people say that because we are saved, we never need to confess, regardless of what we do or what sins we commit.

Others feel like every sin or transgression will sever salvation until it is confessed. These folks live in fear all the

time, and not surprisingly, they are constantly confessing their sins in hopes that they are not caught by surprise and miss a confession when God calls them.

I do not agree with either of these positions. I believe that when I transgress or commit a sin, I WANT to tell God that I am sorry for what I did. I do not confess in order to restore my salvation. I confess because I am genuinely grieved about what I did. Confession restores peace and joy.

I can not imagine taking the position that because I am saved (I am), I will never confess any sins to God.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Joh 1:8-9).

God freely forgives when we freely confess, not for salvation, but to restore the open heaven.

Thank you Jesus for the unspeakable gift! Amen.

END

Doubting Thomas

—by Gerald Hochstetler

The other day I used the phrase “doubting Thomas” and referred to myself as such. I’m not a follower. I trust nothing without researching. I am not saying that is good, that is just who I am.

I’ve done a lot of thinking about that.

A baby is born and totally trusts those in charge, but when those in charge hurt the baby time and time again, after a while, the child draws back. That mis-trust settles deep into its being.

Many of us view God through our early childhood experience. So here I am, with tendencies to doubt. Is it really that

way? Is it really that good? Can I believe the Bible. These are things I've have had to work through.

Thank God that we have a GOOD Father. He really is THAT good. He has pursued me since I was a child. He has worked overtime on my behalf.

Maybe Thomas was also such a man. Is it really you, Jesus? Maybe Thomas had been hurt before, let down by those whom he had believed in. Jesus provided what Thomas needed. He said, “... *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing*” (John 20:27).

Jesus said, “...*blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*” (John 20:29). But Jesus, the kind man that He was, went out of His way for the doubter.

A bruised reed He will not break and a smoldering wick He will not extinguish; He hovers over the smallest flame to keep it aflame.

You may not be sure if you can believe or not. Guess what? If there is even the possibility of faith, God is hovering over you and your circumstances gently blowing. The smallest possibility towards faith is still faith. There will be a flame. Yes sir!

END

I have been thinking about all that is happening in our beloved country and throughout the rest of the world. We are seeing an uprising of unrest, pain, hatred, evil, and wickedness. And right there, in the very midst of it all, stands the most precious bride of Jesus Christ.

Allow me a moment to clarify what I mean by the “bride of Christ”:

1. Bride of Christ:

- The bride of Christ includes those who have experienced the *new birth*; those who, at some point, arrived at the place in their life when they stopped trusting in self, placed all of their trust in Jesus Christ alone, and were born of God. They have received and poses everlasting life. (See John 5:24)
- The Bride of Christ is made up of many colors, dress styles, cultures, and languages. Some drive horse and buggy for their transportation. Other drive cars. Some use kerosene lanterns and others use electric bulbs.

The bride of Christ is NOT Baptist. The bride of Christ is NOT Amish. The bride of Christ is NOT Catholic, Mennonite, Mormon, or Hutterite. There may be Baptists in the bride of Christ. There may be Amish, Catholics, Mennonites, Mormons, and Hutterites in the bride of Christ. But let me say it again, unless you have been personally born of God, you are NOT part of the bride of Christ. (See John 1:12-13; John 3:3,6,7; 1 Peter 1:23)

Allow me to also clarify what I mean by the “world:”

2. The World:

- When the Bible refers to the world, it specifically mentions hate, bitterness, unforgiveness, murder, sexual immorality, lying, cheating, jealousy, greed, pride, etc.

- The Bible also refers to the world as anything that can be seen and touched. If you can see and touch it, it was made by human hands, and is of the world.

For example: if the transportation you use is a shiny black buggy pulled by a horse, it is as much “of the world” as your English neighbor’s shiny car powered by an engine. Both were made by human hands and can be seen with the physical eye and touched with hands.

- Attending and being members of an Amish church does not separate one from the world any more than attending and being members of a Methodist church. Both Amish and Methodist labels were given by someone in the past and are known to us today as “church denominations.” In heaven, there are no church labels. Not a single one.

According to the Bible, people who have not yet been born again (or saved) do not belong to the bride of Christ. Their sins have not been forgiven, they do not have everlasting life, and when they die, they will go to hell. These hell-bound men and women may attend and be members of a certain church label, but church membership does not save people from their sins. Church membership does not provide everlasting life.

Now that we have spent some time discussing and getting a better understanding of who the bride of Christ is and how God describes the world, let’s move on to the subject at heart: The Bride of Christ *in the World*.

Let’s look at righteous Lot and his family, living amid Sodom and Gomorrah.

In Genesis 18-19, the Lord God put on human flesh, took two of His angels

with Him, and went to meet Abraham. After the Lord God and His angels finished eating, we are told in Genesis 18:16:

“And the men rose up from thence and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.”

At a certain point, the Lord, his two angels, and Abraham stopped walking, and they began to gaze down upon two wicked cities: Sodom and Gomorrah. As they discussed further, the Lord God revealed to Abraham that He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone. Immediately, Abraham remembered his nephew Lot, and his family; they lived right in the middle of all the wickedness.

Genesis 18, verse 23 says:

“Abraham drew near, and said, wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?”

“Lord, are you going to destroy the righteous with the unrighteous?” Abraham asked.

If you are like me, you are probably thinking, “Really? There are righteous people living in all that wickedness? What are they doing raising a family in the midst of all that filth? What keeps them from relocating? What keeps them in those cities of sexual immorality?”

In Genesis 18:24, Abraham asked the Lord:

“Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?”

Abraham begins at 50, then 45, 40, 30, 20, and ends up at 10. “Lord, if there be just 10 *righteous* people left, will you be merciful and not destroy the city?”

And the Lord replied: *“I will not de-*

stroy it for ten's sake" (Genesis 18:32).

As we will see a little later, Abraham's nephew Lot, his wife, and two of their unmarried daughters, seem to be the only *righteous* four left in Sodom and Gomorrah. Their sons and married daughters stayed behind. The sons-in-law apparently mocked Lot in Gen 19:14.

Because Abraham had prayed and wrestled with the Lord, and because the Lord is merciful, He sent two of His angels to warn Lot and his family of the coming destruction. When the two angels arrived at Lot's house, we are told that a mob of sex addicted men tried to break the door down, crying:

"Where are the men which came into thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them" (Genesis 19:5).

Genesis 19:4 says both young and old burned with unnatural lust and shouted out their desires for homosexual sex. The mob was not acting in secret; they were shouting aloud their cravings and sexual preference. They were out to commit homosexual rape against Lot's visitors.

We must conclude that Lot rubbed shoulders with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah; they were his day-to-day friends, acquaintances, neighbors, and business associates. He had lived among the worldly too long; he had no testimony before them. In their minds, he was like them. He was one of them,

loving the world and the things of the world.

- Lot is a tragic picture of a backslidden Christian.
- Lot had made his home with the wicked of the earth and had become one of them.
- Lot was a *righteous* man in the eyes of God. (See 1 Peter 2:6-8)

While Lot appears *righteous* in the eyes of God, the daily ongoing filth and wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah had spilled over and was devouring him. Lot and his family became numb to it. No, it did not happen overnight. It happened gradually and over time.

How do we know righteous Lot had grown numb to the wickedness and filth of Sodom and Gomorrah?

1. He referred to the men of the city as "brethren." – 19:7
2. He offered two of his unmarried daughters to the mob in exchange for the two angels. – 19:8
3. The men of God had to drag Lot, his wife, and two daughters out of the city.

Genesis 19:16 says: "*And while he (Lot) lingered, the men (Angels) laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth and set him without the city.*"

Try to imagine the scene:

Lot had become so calloused, so numb, so drugged, and so accepting of the wickedness that he simply could not get himself to leave and separate himself from it.

What does that say for the bride of Christ in our day? Have we become like Lot? Have we become numb and accepting of wickedness and unwilling to take a stand for truth and righteousness?

Are we more zealous and passionate about being right than being covered in God's righteous? Is fitting in with men of greater importance than forsaking all and following Jesus Christ our Lord?

My biggest fear, a gnawing heaviness on my soul, is that we, the bride of Christ, have become so much like the world that it would require a magnifying glass to find true holiness of God.

This is what I feel we have done: we have mixed a bunch of worldly filth in with Christianity and stirred it all together, hoping it would allow us fit in with the world and also the bride of Jesus Christ at the same time.

Jesus had an answer for that kind of lifestyle:

*"No man 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**"* (Matthew 6:24).

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve..." (Jsh 24:15).

END

"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

1 John 2:28

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May

A Helper for All Occasions

(part 1 of 3)

You're not alone—the Holy Spirit is there to help you. Message by Dr. Charles Stanley

God Created Us for His Glory

God's glory and our happiness are never at odds. His pursuit of His own fame is a full commitment to our deepest joy. Message by John Piper.

The Stepping Stones of Salvation

The names of four women are woven through the genealogy of Christ. In their stories we find the plan of salvation. Message by Dr. J. Vernon McGee.

Mama Bear Special: How to Support Your Wife in the Way She's Made

Wondering how to support your wife in the way she's made? John & Hillary Ferrer talk about their path as John empowered Hillary to launch Mama Bear Apologetics.

June

A Helper for All Occasions

(part 2 of 3)

You're not alone—Do you know the Holy Spirit is constantly guiding and empowering you? Message by Dr. Charles Stanley.

This Man Went Down to His House Justified

Neither your good works nor the righteousness that Christ works in you will ever justify you before God. Jesus Himself is your righteousness. Message by John Piper.

How to be the Spiritual Leader of Your Family

"I want to step up at home—but I have no idea what I'm doing!" Family Life President David Robbins talks about how to be the spiritual leader of your family.

The Four Seasons of Marriage

(part 1 of 3)

Why is marital paradise lost? Why do couples feel they have left Eden and live in a jungle of sorts? Since Scripture indicates couples will have trouble in this life, why are husbands and wives unprepared? Message by Emerson Eggerichs.

July

A Helper for All Occasions

(part 3 of 3)

We have the Holy Spirit, the ultimate Helper, to carry us through life's trials. Message by Dr. Charles Stanley

All Scripture is Breathed Out by God—Continue in it

In all your troubles, pain, joy, and pleasures, continue to stay in the Scriptures, because there's no better way to invest than in God's very words. Message by John Piper.

When the Problem is Your Spouse

When you suspect your marriage problem is actually your spouse—what then? Message by Dean Inserra.

The Four Seasons of Marriage

(part 2 of 3)

Join Emerson and Jonathan Eggerichs for part 2 of this three-part series. Why is marital paradise lost? Why do couples feel they have left Eden and live in a jungle of sorts? Since Scripture indicates couples will have trouble in this life, why are husbands and wives unprepared?

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The cost of *The Amish Voice* is \$.75 a copy and is totally funded by readers from across our great country who appreciate the ministry and care to support it. If the Lord would lay it on your heart to come alongside of us by helping with expenses, it would be a great benefit, as well as highly appreciated. Thank you. —Joe Keim, Executive Director

Feedback and Response

1

My parents receive *The Amish Voice*. There was an advertisement within of a book called *What do the Amish Believe*. I sent for it immediately, and with that book came the first lesson (in The ABC's of Christian Growth course), 'Assurance of Salvation.' I was hooked from the beginning! I believe that Jesus did His work within me, forgave my sins, gave me the Holy Spirit, made me born again, and has given me eternal life!

My Bishop once said that he believes the Holy Spirit does not work as powerfully within the believer as He did back in the times of severe persecution, and that he thinks we should rather just allow the church to lead us and make our decisions, rather than thinking we know what's best. I didn't believe that at all. Please pray for me that I can respect my bishop and ministers in spite of their weaknesses. —CP.

Dear CP, Greetings in the name of the Lord. We at Plowman's Academy are excited to hear how much you enjoyed the first lesson. The Bible is the only book that can be read and studied over and over, yet find new truths in it. That is because it's the living words of God and God alone — "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" —John 1:1

"All scripture is give by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for

reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." —2 Timothy 3:16.

That is the whole purpose of Plowman's Academy — to have students study the Scriptures and be instructed in righteousness. The courses and lessons are only a guide to "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" —2 Timothy 2:15.

They do not take the place of the Bible

or add to the Bible in any way.

We pray that your study of Scripture will prompt you to become a life-long student of the Bible.

Matthew 2:24-25 says: "*Therefore whosoever hearth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not for it was founded upon a rock.*"

2

Dear Joe Keim: I am so blessed with your much-needed ministry! I still marvel that Jesus found me in a very dark setting where salvation was very clearly taught but still the system clung to low (ordnung), not so much a Holy Spirit relationship.

I am so intrigued by your "What does Revival look like?" question (November issue of *The Amish Voice*). In my humble opinion, I believe I would recognize it, but there are variable levels.

A transformational world-wide revival affects lost people drawn to the Holy Spirit, often falling prostrate under His power, repenting, confessing sin, and experiencing forgiveness and also lukewarm, inactive believers being refired, and miracles of all kinds. It affects all levels of society effecting huge changes. It is always about God (the Holy Spirit) turning hearts to Hi mself. Blessings on you and your ministry, —RM

I resonate with your response, RM! Thank you for responding. It is my honest belief that real God-sent revivals do not fit anyone's box. Therefore, the majority of rigid and stiff fundamentalists will never experience a real revival.

There are many revivals we could look at, but how about we look at a biblical example. Matthew 3:1 says:

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea.

While church leaders met in their fancy synagogues, followed their age old structured services, had perfect hair-

cuts, and wore their Sunday best, a wild man showed up in long hair, dressed in weird clothes, ate strange food and began preaching in the wilderness. This God-sent hippie didn't fit anyone's box. Church leaders mocked, scorned, and challenged the weirdo. No way, they thought, could this man be God-sent. He didn't fit their customs and he didn't follow their rituals. However, Matthew 3:5-6 makes it clear, revival broke out among the common people.

Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round

about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

It didn't matter to the common man that John appeared and acted outside the box. It didn't matter that many in their circles mocked him. John's followers were so done with dead religion, man-made systems, living in someone's else's box, and depression. They were as dried up cisterns, empty, and emotionless. They desired one thing: more, more, more, of the living God.

Those who became part of the revival were filled and made alive! —Joe Keim

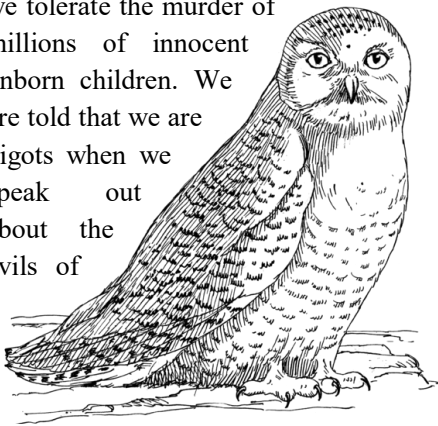
The following article was taken from *The Topical Sermon Notebook, End Times* by Dr. Alan Carr, with permission. www.serrmonnotebook.org, Lenoir, NC.

Continued from March 2023 Issue

III. The Abominations of Satan's Superman (v. 24–25b)

A. He Will Attack The People Of God—Dan. 7:25 The Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and will attack the people of the Lord. He will try to do what Hitler, Stalin and others failed to do: exterminate the Jew. More than anything, this man will hate everything having to do with God and Jesus Christ. He will lash out at the Jews and try to completely destroy them.

(Ill. We are seeing in our day that this spirit is already at work! It is becoming increasingly unpopular to be a Bible believer. In fact, we are often labeled as being intolerant. You watch and see if that is not the buzz word you hear used against the church. We are told that we must tolerate homosexuality and lesbianism. We are told that we must protect the spotted owl, while at the same time we tolerate the murder of millions of innocent unborn children. We are told that we are bigots when we speak out about the evils of



society. We are told that we have no voice in the government. We are told to soften our stance. Keep an eye on things in the next few years. If the Lord doesn't return soon, it may become illegal to be a fundamental, Bible-believing Christian! The church is un-

der attack, and this will continue until the rapture. Then, the focus of Satan's anger will be the nation of Israel.)

B. He Will Attack The Prince Of God—Dan. 8:25—Here, we are told that this man of sin will stand up against the “Prince of Princes.” This is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ! It appears that anything having to do with godliness, holiness, or Christ will be the focus of the attacks of this madman. He will make every effort to stamp out the name of Jesus from the face of the earth!

(Ill. While he is doing this, the Lord will raise an army of young, Jewish men, 144,000 in all, who will go throughout the world preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, **Rev. 14**. The Antichrist will be powerless to stop them! Aren't you glad that even in the midst of chaos, God is still on the throne?!)

(Ill. Again, this attitude is already being manifested in our day. When was the last time you heard someone use the name of Allah as a curse word? When did you hear someone in a fit of anger make use of the name of Buddha? When was the last time you heard your favorite actor take the word “damn” and place the name of Krishna before it? The fact is, you haven't! And you won't! The name that is attacked with alarming frequency is the name of Jesus! I hear that blessed name used as a byword by a Christ-rejecting world and it makes me sick to my stomach. You might as well face it, the devil hates the name of Jesus! He will hate it and he will attempt to discredit it and destroy it until he is cast away in to hell's flames. Why is it that Jesus and His doctrines, are the most hated things in the world? Because if men admit the fact that He is Lord, that He died and rose again, that He is, in fact, the Savior, then man

must admit that he is a sinner or be doomed to hell. If the Bible is right about Jesus, then it stands to reason that it is right about everything else as well. The world hates His name because it points out their sins!)

C. He Will Attack The Place Of God—Dan. 8:25; Dan. 11:36–37; Dan. 9:27; 2 Thes. 2:4; Matt. 24:15—All these verses tell us that the Antichrist will break his seven year covenant with the Jews, that he will attempt to wipe Israel from the map, and that he will enter the newly constructed temple in Jerusalem, walk into the Holy of Holies, and set up his throne. He will declare himself to be God and he will demand worship from all the people, but especially the Jews. He will desecrate their temple. The Jews

(Ill. The passage we read as our text this morning was directly fulfilled by a man named Antiochus Epiphanes.

- a. He was a Syrian.
- b. He came to the throne in 175 B.C. and ruled until 164 B.C.
- c. He was anti-Semitic to the core. He assaulted Jerusalem, murdering over 40,000 in three days, and selling an equal number into cruel slavery. It is thought that on September 6, 171 B.C., he began his evil actions toward the temple.
- d. On December 15, 168, his temple desecration reached its ultimate low, for on that day this idolater sacrificed a giant sow on an idol altar he had made in the Jewish temple. He then forced the priests to swallow its flesh, made a broth of it, and sprinkled all the temple. He finally carried off the golden candlesticks, table of shewbread, altar of incense, various other vessels, and destroyed the sacred books of the Law. A large image of

Jupiter was placed in the Holy of Holies. All this was termed by the horrified Jews as “the abomination of desolation,” and is referred to by Jesus in Matthew 24:15 as a springboard to describe the activities of the future antichrist.

e. All through Palestine, altars to Jupiter were set up and the Jews were forced to sacrifice on them. But at a little Jewish town called Modin (seventeen miles northwest of Jerusalem), there lived a Jewish priest named Mattathias, of the House of Hasmon. He had five sons and this brave old man not only refused to worship Antiochus’ idols, but boldly slew the king’s religious ambassador. The Jewish revolt was on. One of his sons was named Judas and he was called the Maccabee (meaning, the hammer).

For the next few years Judas successfully led an army of Jews against the Syrians. Their brave exploits are described in two Apocrypha books, first and second Maccabees. On December 25, 165 B.C., the Jewish patriots cleansed and rededicated the temple Antiochus had defiled. This later became a Jewish holiday known as the Feast of Dedication (see Jn. 10:22).

Note: In 8:14 there is a time period of 2,300 days mentioned. This apparently began on September 6, 171 B.C. and ended on December 25, 165 B.C. It was, however, on the basis of this period, that William Miller, founder of the modern Seventh Day Adventist movement, went astray. He made the days stand for years and arrived at the date of October 22, 1844, for the return of Christ!

f. Antiochus died in Babylon in 164 B.C. after being soundly defeated in battle.

What Antiochus did in part will be done in full by the Antichrist. He will declare to the world that he is God and that he must be worshiped. The sad thing is that the Bible tells us very clearly that the world will be led to worship this devil from hell, **Rev. 13:8**. The world will not bow to the Lord Jesus who loves them and gave Himself for them, **Rom. 5:8; Rev. 1:5**, but they will worship this satanically charged madman and will give him the praise that should be reserved exclusively for God!)

(Ill. Friend, who are you worshiping this morning? Are you giving your worship to yourself? Your things? Your life? Are you reserving your worship for the Antichrist? The fact is, your worship will be directed somewhere. I would advise that you worship the Lord God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. The Afflictions of Satan’s Superman (v. 25c)

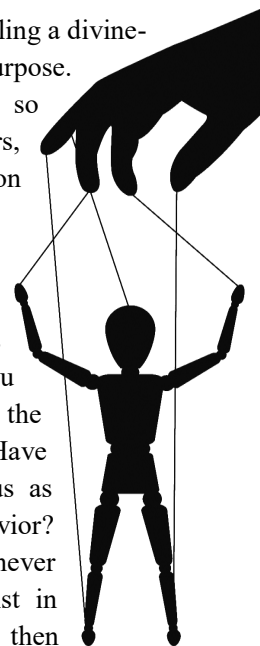
A. **It Will Be Sudden**—**Dan 8:25** says that the Antichrist will be “broken without hand.” This means that the Antichrist will be defeated, but not by man! His kingdom will be overthrown, but it will be a supernatural defeat. This is made even clearer by **Rev. 19:20**. When God judges this man, He will do it swiftly and harshly. Defeat is sure for the Antichrist.

B. **It Will Be Serious**—Notice that **Rev. 19:20** says that Antichrist will enter the Lake of Fire alive! Then, 1,000 years later, Satan himself is judged and condemned to the Lake of Fire. When he is thrown in, the Bible tells us that the Beast is still there, **Rev. 20:10**. In spite of this man’s abilities, in spite of his power, in spite of his greatness, in spite of the fact that he received the worship of men, he is still defeated. All the while he was ruling the world in great power, he was nothing more than a puppet in the hand of God. He was

just a pawn fulfilling a divinely directed purpose.

This man, like so many others, found himself on the wrong side!

(Ill. My friend, which side are you on this morning? Are you in line with the Word of God? Have you trusted Jesus as your personal Savior? If so, you will never see the Antichrist in this world. If so, then



you will be in Heaven, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ while the world writhes under tribulation. If not, then you need to be saved! You are on the wrong side! If the Lord doesn’t come in your life time, you will die and go to Hell if you don’t get right with God. If He does come and finds you lost, you will enter into the Tribulation and you will probably give your worship to the Antichrist, **2 Thes. 2:12**. Where do you stand today?)

Conc: We may wonder what all this has to do with us. The answer is that Jesus is coming and the world is poised to enter a time of trouble like nothing she has ever experienced before. What happens to you all depends on what you do with Jesus Christ. I invite you to come to Him this morning and be saved. If you are saved, I would ask you to look at your life to see if you are pointing men towards Jesus or away from Him by the life you live. I do not fear the Antichrist! I will be gone before he makes his appearance. What about you? Where will you be when Satan’s Superman takes the world by storm? When Daniel looked into these things, he fainted and became ill. He was a godly man! What effect do these words have on your heart this morning?

END

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My Story

—By Norma Miller

Imagine a cage. A cage filled with cobwebs and fog. You know there is light...somewhere, but you simply cannot...in spite of all your best efforts to fix it, find the light. You climb and you claw only to find yourself right back where you were.

Only a few short years ago, that is where I was. I fought with all my might and mane to escape my prison, but I kept coming right back to where I was. The issue is - I didn't know what my prison was. I thought if I did all the right things, I would fix my life, and I would get out of my cage. But when you believe your cage is one thing and it's actually another, are you going to get free?

What is your prison? Is it your mindset? Is it your beliefs?

I would like to share with you a simple truth. Your prison will ALWAYS be made up of lies and fears. Every time.

The lies we believe keep us bound. You can believe something is perfectly safe, all while giving power over to it. For example: A little match seems harmless enough, doesn't it? And striking it and watching it burn isn't scary. But if you drop it into a little pile of hay in the barn, it becomes a whole different sto-

ry. If you believe it is harmless and you mess with it, you can fall prey to this lie and create a massive havoc.

In the same way, lies that we believe about life and relationships can tie us up to the devil for long, wasted years. What lies do you believe?

Our fears also keep us bound. Have you ever heard the saying, "Everything you want is on the other side of fear?" Now, this can be taken the wrong way and cause us to keep grasping for wants and wishes. We are not talking about that here. We are talking about the things we know deep down, or things that we meant to be part of our lives, perhaps our calling, but we are too afraid to do anything that we have never done before. So we stay stuck, right where we are, and we watch with envy those who have been set free of our own limiting mindsets. What are you afraid of?

What is God calling you to that you are afraid of? What do you believe that is untrue and that is keeping you frozen in time while life passes you by?

My own cage was actually the cage of abuse. I stayed stuck in denial for a long, long time. It hurt too much to realize that what I believed to be true was actually not...that the one I be-

lieved was safe was actually the enemy...that if I wanted to be free, I had to set some pretty strong boundaries. I think the hardest thing to accept was that I could not fix it, even if I did all the right things. We can never force others to do what is right. The choice is theirs. We can do the right things and present them with choices, but ultimately the choice is theirs.

So in the end, I was faced with the lies I believed, my fears that kept me bound. I chose freedom. Even though getting free was the most painful, hardest, most grueling work I had ever done. I wanted freedom. I wanted out of that cage. And I found the light! I am no longer clawing or shaking off fog. The light is clear and beautiful! Through it all, I found God to be the most faithful, compassionate friend and provider, and I learned to know Him in a way I never would have otherwise.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

(I Peter 2:9)