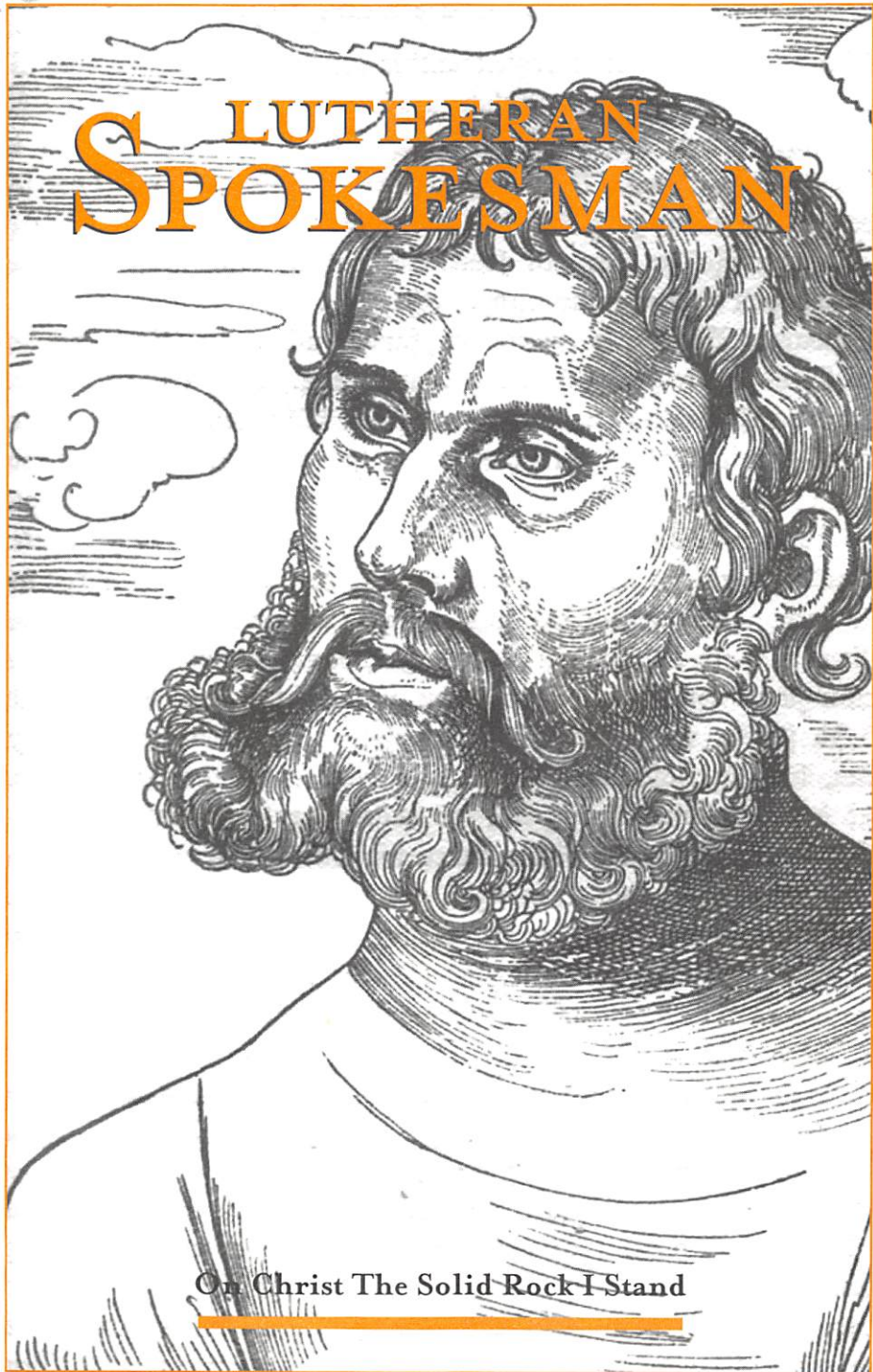


Read

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN



On Christ The Solid Rock I Stand

On Christ The Solid Rock

Late on October 31, 1517, Dr. Martin Luther nailed ninety-five theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, a city in Saxony, Germany.

Luther offered the theses for scholarly debate over the sale of indulgences. Indulgences were documents promising time off in purgatory. They were sold by Pope Leo X in order to raise money for himself, and to pay for the large dome being constructed over the basilica of Peter and Paul in Rome. Indulgences were popular because they convinced people they could get by without the Lord's forgiveness.

The ninety-five theses objected to what the indulgences offered, the power of the pope, and most important—how the spiritual and eternal welfare of sinners was denied by them and those who offered them. Luther was only attempting to correct these grave errors.

Luther did not arrive on the scene to start a different church. On the con-



The Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Photo by Pastor Daniel Fleischer on a recent trip to Lutherland.

trary, Luther had suffered much because of his awareness of sins against almighty God. In those days Christ was not proclaimed as the sinner's Savior, but as a terrible Judge who sought to destroy the sinner. Through his studies and lectures on the Psalms, Galatians, and Romans, Luther came to believe that the Bible presents

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the unalterable truth of God, and that Christ is the only Savior of sinners.

In 1518 the Pope sent Cardinal Cajetan of Augsburg with the following demands upon Luther: "First, repent of your errors and recant them. Second, promise not to teach them again. Third, refrain from doing anything that might disturb the peace of the church." When Luther asked what errors he had committed, Cajetan labeled Luther's insistence that faith—rather than the sacraments—justified sinners as a "false innovation."

Everything boiled down to the authority of the pope in contrast to the authority of the Scriptures. Characterizing much of what occurred between 1518 and 1521 is a remark by Erasmus of Rotterdam, who said that although "Luther was too sharp in his criticism, his only crimes were to have knocked off the pope's crown and to have kicked the monks in their bellies."

The emperor granted the request of Frederick of Saxony that any meeting of the princes to deal with the matter should be in Germany; this was finally set for 1521 in Augsburg. When the time came, Luther was ushered into the Diet on April 17.

The scene was overwhelming. Emperor Charles V was seated on a raised dais, surrounded by his advisers and representatives from Rome. All around were Spanish soldiers dressed in

their parade best. In the middle stood a table piled with books. The Archbishop of Trier pointed to the books and announced to Luther that he had been called to answer two questions: Had he written these books? Was there a part of them he would now recant?

"I Will Not Recant . . ."

Luther was stunned. No debate, not even a judicial hearing! His judges had already made their decision. Luther acknowledged that the books were his, and that he had written more. In answer to the second question he said: "This touches God and His Word. This affects the salvation of souls . . . I beg you, give me time." He was given one day. He wrote a friend saying: "So long as Christ is merciful, I will not recant a single jot or tittle."

The next day the meeting was delayed until 6:00 p.m. Candlelight increased the drama. The same questions were put to him. He responded with a short speech about his works, "in which I have taught about the Christian faith and good works in such a proper, clear, and Christian manner," that even his opponents thought well of them. He couldn't retract these. There were others in which he had "attacked the papacy and papist teachings." To retract these would only encourage unscriptural practices. Finally, there were some in which he had attacked individuals. He admitted to have been too harsh in some, but still could not retract them because those individuals defended papal tyranny.

Luther was charged with avoiding the point and was told to answer with simple words the question: Will you recant or not? He responded: "Unless I can be instructed and convinced with



*...that foundation
is Jesus Christ.*

—1 Corinthians 3:11

evidence from the Holy Scriptures or with open, clear, and distinct grounds and reasoning—and my conscience is captive to the Word of God—then I cannot and will not recant, because it is neither safe nor wise to act against conscience.” He then added: “Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen.”

What led Luther from his attempt at scholarly debate to a bold confession before the princes of this world? He had learned what Jesus meant when He said: “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven”

(Mt. 10:32).

He had grown in his understanding of the Bible as God’s eternal truth and as the sure foundation of faith. “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11).

As heirs of the Reformation we gratefully remember what the Lord accomplished through Luther. May we ever rest our faith on the same foundation on which Luther stood: “*On Christ the solid rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand!*”

—Pastor Rick Grams



REFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION

As the years have gone by, this festival which we know as Reformation has suffered from many distractions.

For example, many even among our own people are more likely to think of October 31st as Halloween than as Reformation Day.

In recent years many churches have relabeled this church festival as the Festival of Reconciliation rather than Reformation. Reconciliation is so much nicer a sentiment during these ecumenical times than reformation is. By its very nature reformation declares that something was wrong, that something had to be corrected, that there were important issues at stake, and so there were. Those were issues of doctrine—the teachings of Holy Scripture that show us the way of life and salvation.

Yes, reconciliation has become the word for these modern times. More and more churches line up to be recon-

ciled to one another at the expense of doctrine, at the expense of the gospel truth. The importance of the truth has been diminished. Differences in doctrine have been ignored. All this in favor of focusing on matters where there is unity, or in favor of resolving differences in policy and form that can be more easily resolved. Who cares about doctrine anyway? It is so dry and boring!

Such is the attitude of too many toward the saving truth from God. In 2 Timothy chapter four, St. Paul warned of times to come when people “will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be

turned aside to fables.”

Beware Of Compromise

These fables have led millions farther and farther away from the reconciliation that really matters—that reconciliation which God worked, and of which the Scriptures speak: “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19). “We were reconciled to God through the death of His Son” (Rom. 5:10).

It is this reconciliation that the Reformation was really all about, plus the fact that a man is justified by faith in this act of reconciliation—and by faith alone. That is the doctrine which, by the grace of God, the Lutherans of the Reformation strove to preserve against attack from within and without.

It is the restoration and preservation of this precious truth among us that we observe on Reformation Day with joyous thanksgiving. It is this amazing truth—this exhilarating doctrine—which we must be careful to preserve that our children may know the bless-

“ . . . These fables have led millions farther and farther away from the reconciliation that really matters—that reconciliation which God worked and of which the Scriptures speak . . . ”

ing of this Reformation heritage.

Our observance of the Reformation with its historical setting reminds us of how easily these truths can be obscured by fables which men devise.

It also reminds us of the bleak darkness that is left for souls when God’s truth is compromised.

So as we celebrate Reformation Sunday, the joy of reconciliation will be at the center of our observance. It shall not be a celebration of some trumped-up reconciliation of outward religious organizations at the expense of God’s saving truth; but rather a celebration of that reconciliation revealed to us by God in His Word, and which we cherish by faith in His Son: that “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

—Pastor Theodore Barthels



Read all

A Reformation Message from our CLC President—

“The Reformation was about a return to Scripture and the authority of the Word of God. By its actions over the last years ELCA is turning the calendar back to pre-Reformation times. . . .”

Whence Lutheranism?

As I had written an article for Reformation and was letting it percolate before sending it to the editor, a report in the news suggested a rewrite.

According to two different head-

lines, both of which ultimately say the same thing, “Evangelical Lutherans” reached “accord with Episcopalians,” or approved a “long-pending unity pact” with the Episcopalians.

The final hurdle was overcome when the ELCA agreed with the Episcopalians on Apostolic Succession. With the favorable vote at its August 1999 Convention, the bishops of ELCA now trace their authority back to the apostles. That is the only conclusion to which one can come since the Episcopal Church teaches that its bishops “are through an unbroken chain the successors of the Apostles” (*Popular Symbolics*, p. 238). It is either that or the Lutheran bishops will still be a cut below their Episcopalian counterparts. The sop for those who disagree with the compromise is that the ELCA will be able to maintain many of its Lutheran traditions.

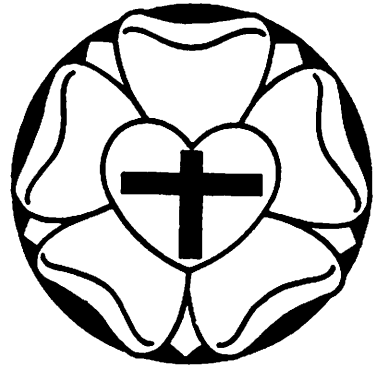
Two things: “When the elephant has its foot in the door . . .” Further, of what value are traditions when the doctrine is fouled?

According to one public report, the delegates to the ELCA convention this past August applauded their compromise by singing the hymn, “If You But Trust in God to Guide You”!

Nothing surprises any more today. ELCA already has a pact with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ. At the 1999 convention the ELCA also entered into a communion relationship with the Moravian Church in America.

The reality is that the latest compromise of the ELCA is simply another milestone in its unfettered return to Rome with whom it has already found accommodation in the doctrine of justification. Anyone who has observed the church scene over the last 50 years has seen it coming.

The Reformation was about a return to Scripture and the authority of



the Word of God. By its actions over the last years ELCA is turning the calendar back to pre-Reformation times.

Luther once said: “. . . Nor should we let men toy with Scripture, juggle the Word of God, and make it submit to being explained, twisted, stretched and revised to suit people or achieve peace and union; for then there could be no secure or stable foundation on which consciences might rely” (*What Luther Says*, Vol. III, par. 4770, p. 1475).

He also said that it was not tyrants who were the greatest danger to the church, but indifference from within. It is disheartening to see how those within the ELCA who object nevertheless are willing to accept the decision in the spirit of “Christian love,” as one pastor put it. Another said he would stay in the church but wanted “to sit down and talk.”

Therein lies a greater danger to souls than the unvarnished and easily recognizable abuse of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

The theme of our CLC Convention in 2000 is “*God’s Word is STILL Our Heritage.*” That is a fine theme. But saying so does not make it so. Preaching the Word and living it demonstrate the reality.

We can be true children of the

Reformation or we can be a contributory cause to the necessity for a new Reformation. The conclusion of what we are will be clear if we remember that the purpose of the church is not the perpetuation of itself through compromise and for the glory of bishops. The purpose of the church is to hold before the sheep the salvation accomplished

through our Lord Jesus Christ.

If the sheep will follow the voice of the Good Shepherd (John 10) and enter eternal life, they must hear it. To help the sheep hear the voice of the Good Shepherd is our privilege.

If what is taught is not the truth, it is not the voice of the Good Shepherd. That is our responsibility.

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer

Read all

A Man Who Shocked The World

In the Fall of 1998 a political dark horse from the Reform Party, a man by the name of Jesse Ventura, came onto the scene of Minnesota politics and, as he said, “shocked the world.” He shocked the world with a fresh take and new ideas about politics and government in Minnesota.

He shocked Minnesotans by suggesting that the surplus tax money belonged to them, not to the government. Even more shocking was his suggestion that the government did not exist to give the people a leg up on life. And even more shocking than all of this was his election in November.

Whether or not this will be a good thing for Minnesota remains to be seen. But like him or not, Ventura’s election definitely marked a change for politics in Minnesota.

At Luther’s time the Christian church was in desperate need of reform. “Ultra-conservatives” had taken over the church and had put a stranglehold on the Gospel. Rather than people receiving the assurance of the forgiveness of sins through the blood and merits of Jesus Christ, they were encouraged to look to saints, to



themselves, to the papacy, and to their pocketbook to find relief from their sins.

When these “conservatives” were challenged and change was demanded, the reply was: “That’s the way we’ve always done it.” Their rationalization was that, if it was good enough for the “fathers,” it should be good enough for you.

Then in 1517 a radical named Martin Luther came on the scene. With his “liberal” new ideas and “fresh” thinking the Reformation began.

Martin Luther shocked the world with his “new” ideas. Imagine the suggestion that God’s Word should be available to the common people in their common language! Imagine the suggestion that the free forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed without cost; or that a person is justified, not by works but through faith in Jesus Christ alone!

What dangerous, new thinking was this!? Of course, we know that it was the Lord who instituted the Reformation, and that Luther’s “fresh,” “new” thinking was really the good, old preaching of the Gospel that had been missing from the Roman Catholic Church for centuries.

Need For Reform

Everyone among us would agree that Lutheranism today is in desperate need of reform. Lutheranism as a whole could use a good dose of “conservatism”—not political conservatism nor the popular religious conservatism which focuses only on family and morality.

Certainly these are important. But Lutheranism and Christianity in general need to return to conservatism in the truest sense of the world—to preserve what has been established, not by politicians, not by a pope, not by an organization or culture. Rather, to go back to or preserve that which has been established by the LORD God in His Holy Word—most notably the doctrine of justification through faith in Christ alone apart from our works.

With the recent union between the Episcopal Church and the ELCA, it would seem that Lutheranism is slowly sliding back into the web of Catholicism and her Pope. As the cry

goes up from the world for “one church!” the pressure to compromise and give up the precious Word of God will be increased.

Martin Luther writes: *“Oh, with great effort and exertion, also with proof from Holy Scripture, did I barely succeed in justifying before my own conscience that I, a lone man, dared rise against the pope, consider him the Antichrist, the bishops his apostles, the schools of higher learning his house of ill fame! How often my heart struggled, rebuked me, and threw up to me their one and strongest argument: You alone are wise? Can it be that all the others are erring and have been erring for so long a time? What if you are erring and leading into error so many people, all of whom will be eternally damned? Such questions continued until Christ strengthened and settled me by His own certain Word so that my heart no longer struggles but confronts these arguments of the papists as of a rock-bound shore the wave and laughs at their threatening and storming”* (SL 19, 1069).

What a shock it is to the world that there are some who will not give in, give up, or compromise God’s Word!

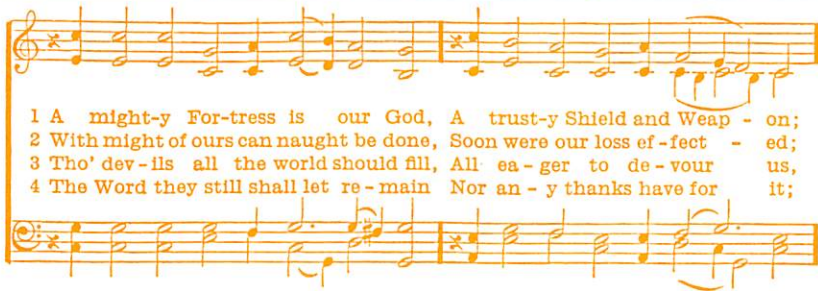
God Himself sees to the preservation of His saving Word. He did at the time of the Reformation through His servant Martin Luther. And He will see to the preservation and proclamation of His saving Word today.

May He strengthen and settle us by His Word as we strive to weather the waves of the world and to remain faithful to God and His saving Word.

—Pastor Joel Fleischer



Appreciating Our Lutheran Hymns



1 A might-y For-tress is our God, A trust-y Shield and Weap - on;
 2 With might of ours can naught be done, Soon were our loss of -fect - ed;
 3 Tho' dev - ils all the world should fill, All - ea - ger to de - vour us,
 4 The Word they still shall let re - main Nor an - y thanks have for it;

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

A Hymn for Reformation

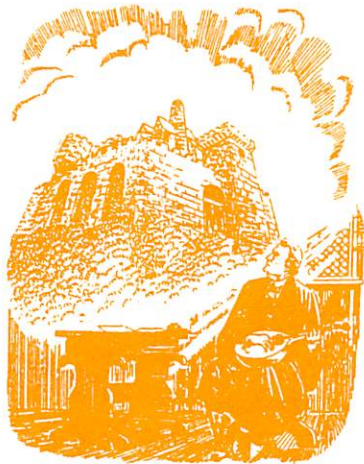
#262 in The Lutheran Hymnal

Both under King Saul and as king himself, David experienced some amazingly great military feats, many of them against extremely great odds. He had single-handedly slain the great Philistine giant Goliath (see article elsewhere in this issue). He and his soldiers had captured the stronghold of Jerusalem, which he later made his capital city. He had extended the borders of Israel to their greatest extent with victories over all his enemies.

But even with victory after victory, David didn't forget where the true source of strength lay. He wrote: "God is our refuge and strength . . ." (Psalm 46:1).

Our church's namesake, Martin Luther, found a great source of personal comfort and strength in these inspired words of David. They moved him to pen the words of this month's well-known and much beloved hymn.

For many centuries before Luther, the devil had been increasingly successful in hiding the truth that we are saved by grace, faith, and Scripture alone. Those teachings had become buried beneath the rubble of work righteousness in the Roman Catholic



Church. And as God led Luther to uncover those core truths, the devil waged all-out war against him.

Yet, though he often stood alone—as at the Diet of Worms—Luther stood his ground.

From the words of his pen we see that his strength (as was David's) was in God: "*Though devils all the world should fill . . . they shall not overpower us. . . . The Word . . . is by our side . . . with His good gifts and Spirit.*"

May the Lord of hosts, the God of Jacob, ever be with us as our Refuge!

—Pastor Paul Krause

LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

First Samuel, Chapter Seventeen

David and Goliath

Everyone is familiar with the Bible account found in 1 Samuel 17. It is the narrative of David and Goliath. We love to hear the words of that great victory. David, a young man, a shepherd, son of Jesse of Bethlehem, goes out to do battle against the Philistine giant and military hero, Goliath, and comes back the winner.

This account has universal appeal in our country with the way it portrays the “small guy” beating out the “big guy.” I remember that it was used by a TV network news-magazine as an introduction for its report on how a small private firm had gone up against some corporate giant and had won. People like to see the underdog come out on top!

That is a catchy theme; but if that is all a person gets out of the David and Goliath account, he is missing the whole point.

“Fear, Love, And Trust . . .”

In his *Small Catechism*, Martin Luther explains the First Commandment: “You shall have no other gods” with these words: “We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.” This David and Goliath account is a shining example of how to trust in God above all things.

David was in what many would

call a no-win situation. He was not a soldier. He was a shepherd. He had no experience in the battle scene, not to mention in single one-on-one combat.

The soldier he was to fight was a seasoned veteran. He was tall; almost ten feet tall. He was strong; the spear shaft he carried was compared to a weaver’s beam, with a head on it that weighed fifteen pounds. He struck fear into the hearts of everyone as he came out every day to ridicule the Israelites with his taunts and challenges.

How could David do what he did? How could he defeat this giant? The Scriptures are clear. He trusted in God, saying: “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (17:16)

Certainly the other soldiers in Saul’s army professed a faith and trust in the living God. But this was a military thing. This was a situation that called for physical strength as well as knowledge in armed combat. This was not a place for “religious” fervor.

And yet godly fervor is exactly what David displayed: “Then David said to the Philistine: “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver

you into my hand. . . ." (17:45-46). And with God at his side, David did defeat Goliath with a shepherd's defense: a few smooth stones and a sling.

Can God Be Trusted?

How much can YOU trust God—for help, guidance, direction, strength, and so on? "But," we say, "but . . . there are certain things where God just doesn't 'fit.'"—I am having trouble communicating with my spouse.—I am under a lot of stress with my boss, or with deadlines at work.—My employees are not producing as they should.—My children are disobedient.

These things seem to call for professional help—counsellors, teachers, time-planning instructors, labor dispute mediators. God just doesn't "fit."

Or does He?

What can we learn from David and Goliath? Can God be trusted for help in

everything? Is there really anything we encounter in our Christian lives in which God cannot give us His aid? Does it matter if the situation at hand is military or matrimony, vocation or vacation, family or friends?

This example of David's confident trust is recorded so that we might have "hope." We CAN trust God: He is "a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). We SHOULD trust God: "Cast all your care upon Him for He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

DO we trust God?

David said: "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine" (17:37).

God help us make that statement of trust our own! "God HAS delivered me from _____; He WILL deliver me from _____!"

—Pastor Paul Krause



Biblical Perspectives On The End Times

Third in a series

THE KINGDOM

Sin's Pollution

Created in the image of God, but losing that image and being expelled from Paradise, meant that each person would be born in sin, would sin, and would merit eternal damnation. Thus SIN became everyone's problem. But the solution of that problem lay beyond the moral capabilities of sinful mankind.

The solution had to come from the Lord God. He announced the coming of a Hero, the Headcrusher, who would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15) who had deceived Adam and Eve and brought death and damnation upon the human race. The Headcrusher would come, but the details of how He would solve the problem of sin were not revealed.

Centuries passed. Sin polluted the

entire human race being hardened in unbelief, but Noah and his family found grace in the eyes of the Lord. The Lord destroyed the human race, but spared Noah and his family. After the flood, the Lord through Noah foretold that the Headcrusher would come from Shem, but again no specifics as to how the problem would be solved were given. Once again sin engulfed the human race and brought down upon it the judgment of Babel. Twice the promise of the Headcrusher was almost lost in the sea of sin-polluted mankind.

The Promised Savior

Then the Lord changed His tactics. He chose one man, Abraham, promised to make of him a great nation, promised him a homeland, and assured him that through a descendant of his “all the families of the earth would be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). The promised Savior of sin-polluted mankind would come from the descendants of Abraham, but what He would do to save was not revealed.

Centuries passed. The promise of the Savior of mankind was passed from Abraham to Isaac, to Jacob, and then to Judah. The descendants of these men became a nation in Egypt, an enslaved nation liberated by the Lord through Moses. He led them to Mt. Sinai where He made a covenant with them. In that covenant the Lord revealed how the promised Savior would save from sin. The method had already been indicated the night of the first Passover: **SAVED BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB**—or salvation by substitution.

SAVED BY THE BLOOD OF A SUBSTITUTE! That was the divinely instituted method by which the Promised One would bring salvation to all. The Lord inculcated that saving

truth at Sinai. In the Book of Leviticus the Lord instructed His people through Moses that every man bringing a burnt offering should put his hand on the head of the burnt offering so that it would be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him (Lev. 1:1-5).

On the Day of Atonement, Aaron was instructed to “lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man” (Lev. 16:21).

Salvation by the shedding of the blood of a substitute. That was the GOSPEL. Isaiah proclaimed it in these words: “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Is. 53:4-5).

But salvation through a divine Lamb faded from the consciousness of the people. What stirred their souls was the prophecy of the coming of a King whom they were hoping would free them from the tyranny of Rome and restore the glory of Israel as it was in the days of David and Solomon. The kingdom they longed for was not spiri-

“ . . . Salvation through a divine Lamb faded from the consciousness of the people . . . The kingdom they longed for was not spiritual but carnal—a kingdom like the kingdoms of this world.”

tual but carnal—a kingdom like the kingdoms of this world.

The angel Gabriel informed Mary that the Son she would bear would “be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end” (Lk. 1:32-33). That is not the promise of an earthly kingdom, but rather of a spiritual kingdom called the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven.

A Spiritual Kingdom!

The kingdom was and remains spiritual! The Holy Spirit gave this job description of the Baptist’s ministry: “He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk. 1:16-17). He was to be “the voice of one crying in the wilderness; Prepare the way of the Lord” (Is. 40:3). Consistent with these words of prophecy, the message of John was a call to repentance, a call for fruits of repentance, a warning of judgment to come, and the assurance of the Coming One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (Mt. 3:1-12). No mention of an earthly kingdom; no call to arms!

So also with Jesus. His message was the same as that of John: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven (not of earth) is at hand” (Mt. 4:17). When Jesus sent out the Twelve, He instructed them to proclaim: “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt. 10:7). When Jesus sent out the Seventy, He instruct-

ed them to heal the sick and to assure the people: “The kingdom of God has come near to you” (Lk. 10:9). When the Seventy returned and reported that even the demons were subject to them, Jesus exclaimed: “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Lk. 10:17). Jesus curbed the enthusiasm of the Seventy by exhorting them to rejoice that their names were written in heaven. Personal salvation, not the establishment of an earthly kingdom, is the goal of the kingdom of heaven. Nonetheless, the casting out of demons revealed the true nature of the kingdom and the fact that it had come (Lk. 11:20).

Kingdom Characteristics

The characteristics of the kingdom reveal its spiritual nature. The Pharisees had heard repeatedly the Lord’s message that the kingdom had come, but they saw nothing that indicated to them the coming of the kingdom. They asked Jesus when the kingdom would come. Jesus responded: “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you” (Lk. 17: 20-21). The rise and fall of earthly kingdoms can be seen and recorded in history books, but not so the kingdom of God. It is invisible, hidden in the hearts of men, women, and children ruled by the King.

What kind of a king and what kind of a kingdom were the people looking for? That became evident after Jesus had fed five thousand and more with but five barley leaves and two small fish. What a king this Jesus would make! With but a word of thanksgiving He could fill the stomachs of the multitudes! They were about to come and

“ . . . Earthly kingdoms are established and maintained by the power of the sword. The kingdom of God is established and maintained by the sword of the Spirit, which is the gospel of our Lord Jesus.”

force Him to become their king. When Jesus perceived this, He departed alone to a mountain to pray. The next day He proclaimed Himself to be the Bread of Life, and many turned away.

When Peter sought to defend Jesus by drawing his sword, Jesus rebuked him: “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish with the sword” (Mt. 26:52). Earthly kingdoms are established and maintained by the power of the sword. The kingdom of God is established and maintained by the sword of the Spirit, which is the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

When Jesus was interrogated by Pilate concerning His kingdom, Jesus testified: “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here” (Jn. 18:36). Pilate understood; the Jews did not and still do not comprehend the

nature of the kingdom.

The apostle Paul in one brief statement teaches what the kingdom is not and what it is: “The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). The Jews had felt no need for righteousness, for they were confident that their own righteousness was adequate. Hence the Lord’s kingdom had nothing to offer them.

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul described the citizen of the Kingdom of God as girded with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, having shod his feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace, taking the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of Spirit—praying always (Eph. 6:10-18). That is hardly a description of a citizen of an earthly kingdom, but indeed one of our Lord’s kingdom.

The kingdom that most Jews awaited and still await is not the kingdom that Jesus established. The kingdom comes and remains, as Luther put it: “when our Heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word, and lead a godly life here in time, and hereafter in eternity.”

—Pastor Em. Paul F. Nolting



SMORGASBORD

• ‘EMBARRASSING KANSAS’

An editorial so titled appeared in the August 16, 1999 Corpus Christi (Texas) *Caller-Times*. A subtitle comes closer to identifying the supposed source of “embarrassment” for the state of Kansas: “Students will be the losers if valid science is not taught.”

According to the article, what is meant by “valid science” is the theory of evolution. We are familiar with none of the history leading up to the decision, but the Kansas state board of education “has undermined the teaching of evolution in Kansas public schools . . . erasing mention of the subject in the

state curriculum guide and thereby making it easy for schools to quit teaching it . . .” (editorial)

To no one’s surprise this decision meets with the disapproval of some citizens of Texas, and no doubt of Kansas and other states as well—especially with those who agree with the editorial’s sentiment that “The creationists are not as lazy as they are ignorant Their ignorance is omnipresent, however, and is immediately seen when they ramble on that evolution is a theory, not a fact.”—More is said, but we will spare our readers.

If the *Caller-Times* editorial speaks for some, the following speaks for others. The pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church (CLC), Corpus Christi, wrote the following as a letter to the editor:

‘Embarrassing Kansas’ (10/16/99) is itself an embarrassment. Calling evolution “fact” is belied by the Word of God and the reality that evolutionary “facts” are continually changing.

Students are indeed losers if valid science is not taught, as you claim. But evolution is not valid science. True science can be replicated. Evolution is a theory. Your high school science book that teaches the 2nd law of thermodynamics contradicts evolution. If you believe evolution is fact, you cannot prove one wrong who chooses to believe that the jet on which you fly was assembled by a windstorm blowing through a junkyard.

Only one was present when the world began. It was “God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.” “By faith we believe that the worlds were framed by the Word of God.” That is in the Bible. The pity is not only that people promote evolution as credible

science. The greater pity is that most people no longer believe the Bible.

No wonder society is in the shape it is. Evolution needs no God. No God of judgment. No God of mercy. Let the fun begin, and when you call for help, who will answer?

(—signed: Rev. Daniel Fleischer)

By the way, in spite of the state board’s ruling, the teaching of evolution is not forbidden in Kansas public schools. In fact, we have read a follow-up piece in which evolutionistic teachers in Kansas state that they still plan on teaching the theory in spite of the fact that, as long as the ruling stands, the subject will not be mentioned in textbooks.

One more aside. The masthead of the Corpus Christi newspaper sent to us carries this “word to the wise”: ‘Give them light and the people will find their own way.’ As the pastor’s letter suggests, the source of light that mankind—even third millennium mankind!—so desperately needs (if not wants) is God’s Word. The psalmist says: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (119:105).

• **‘THE POPE’S VISIT’** (*Pope John Paul II visited St. Louis, Mo. January 25-26, 1999. The following appeared in the subsequent Sunday bulletin of Grace Lutheran Church, Sleepy Eye, Minnesota. Paul Fleischer is pastor.*)

The Pope’s visit to Mexico and America (St. Louis) points out again the sad delusion of so many of his followers. He is a demigod as far as many people are concerned who worship the ground he walks on and hang on every word he speaks—regardless of whether what he says is in harmony with the teachings of Christ and Holy Scripture. Says Luther: “*It is impossible to sup-*

Read - read study still with bible **Of the Antichrist**

43. As to the Antichrist we teach that the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures concerning the Antichrist, 2 Thess. 2:3-12; 1 John 2:18, have been fulfilled in the Pope of Rome and his dominion. All the features of the Antichrist as drawn in these prophecies, including the most abominable and horrible ones, for example, that the Antichrist “as God sitteth in the temple of God,” 2 Thess. 2:4; that he anathematizes the very heart of the Gospel of Christ, that is, the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins by grace alone, for Christ’s sake alone, through faith alone, without any merit or worthiness in man (Rom. 3:20-28; Gal. 2:16); that he recognizes only those as members of the Christian Church who bow to his authority; and that, like a deluge, he had inundated the whole Church with his antichristian doctrines till God revealed him through the Reformation — these very features are the outstanding characteristics of the Papacy. (Cf. Smalcald Articles. *Triglot*, p. 515, para. 39 to 41; p. 401, para. 45;) Hence we subscribe to the statement of our Confessions that the Pope is “the very Antichrist.” (Smalcald Articles. *Triglot*, p. 475, para. 10).

—Brief Statement

pose that God would have neglected to institute with at least one clear statement an institution as great as they make the papacy out to be” (What Luther Says, Vol. II, p. 1007).

By contrast, our Lutheran Confessions and the *Brief Statement* of 1932 (both of which we orthodox Lutherans subscribe to), declare that the Papacy (the office of the Pope) is the very Antichrist referred to in 2 Thessalonians chapter two. We hold to this because, in the name of Christ, the pope exalts himself over the church, “the temple of God,” and deceives the world with his many false teachings.

Here is more from Luther on the subject: “*They (Roman Catholics) have actually carried matters so far, these wretched mouthpieces of the devil, that they boast—not with obscure words but freely and openly—that the pope with his church is above Holy Scripture and that he has the power to change, suspend, forbid, and explain it as he pleases. And his hand-*

icraft consisted in making out of Holy Scripture, as a potter out of clay, an earthen vessel or a jug or a pot at will; and, however he fashioned the material, it was an article of Christian faith. To this day they do this with Christ’s words and institution of both forms in the Sacrament. The pope rules over these words and this text of Christ as a potter over his clay. Whatever he does with it, we must accept it or be burned, murdered, and exiled without mercy.” (WLS, II, pl. 1008)

What are some of the papal teachings which have no basis in Scripture? Such things as the adoration of Mary, purgatory*, masses (prayers) for the dead, that he himself is Christ’s vicar on earth, indulgences*, the withholding of the cup from the laity, the teaching that baptism forgives only original sin, and others. As sad as all the above, worst of all is that Roman Catholicism still officially condemns the clear scriptural teaching of salvation (justification) by FAITH ALONE in Christ apart from the works of the Law.

As heirs of the Reformation, God help us to stand fast and firm in the truth of His Word, as we sing in the hymn:

Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word;
Curb those who fain** by craft and sword
Would wrest the Kingdom from Thy Son
And set at naught all He hath done.

* A *Spokesman* reader sent us a clipping from *The Denver Post* (November 28, 1998) titled: *Pope offers indulgences for millennium*. The article began: "*For Roman Catholics, the year 2000 offers early salvation. Pope John*

Paul II announced Friday that throughout the millennium celebration, penitents who do a charitable deed or give up cigarettes or alcohol for a day can earn an 'indulgence' that will eliminate time in purgatory. . . ." Together with the newspaper clipping, our reader attached this comment: "This is proof that the Catholic Church hasn't changed. How sad for all the people caught in this web of blasphemy." Sad indeed.

** "fain" means "with eagerness, gladly"



Ninth In A Series (from an essay by Pastor Thomas Schuetze)—

Psalm 129

"LORD, thank You for saving me from my enemies."

A Psalm of Thanks

Psalm 129

"Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth." Let Israel now say—"Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth; yet they have not prevailed against me. The plowers plowed on my back; They made the furrows long." The LORD is righteous; He has cut in pieces the cords of the wicked.

Let all those who hate Zion be put to shame and turned back. Let them be as the grass on the housetops, which withers before it grows up. With which the reaper does not fill his hand, nor he who binds sheaves, his arms. Neither let those who pass by them say, "The blessing of the LORD be upon you; We bless you in the name of the LORD!"

This psalm has the same general theme as Psalm 124. In it the author, speaking for the nation of Israel, recalls the many times that he had been afflicted by his enemies from the time of his youth (that is, from the time that

the Israelites left the land of Egypt; cf. Hosea 2:15). Examples of such enemies: the Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, Midianites, and Assyrians. The psalmist also recalls with thankful heart how in each instance the Lord God worked for His people a mighty deliverance.

As the pilgrim bands wended their way to the city of Jerusalem to worship Jehovah, they would have had good reason to reflect on these events of the past and to sing this song of thanks. Had the Lord not recently demonstrated His love and faithfulness toward them *again* by throwing off from them the yoke of Babylon and bringing them back to their homeland? How fitting that they should praise Him for this!

We join the psalmist in praising the Lord. The enemies that oppress God's people today may not be identical to

those whom the people of God faced centuries ago. But they still do exist and they are formidable and dangerous. Yet it remains true: whoever the oppressors

of God's people may be, in whatever period of history they rise up, they will be overthrown by the Lord. They can harm us none. We need not fear them.

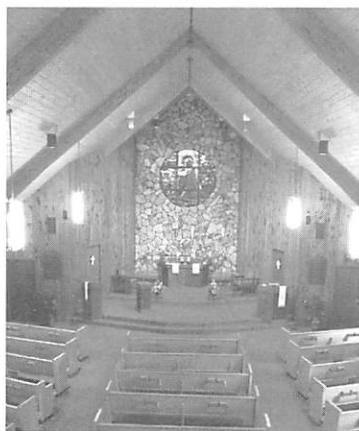


40th Anniversary Celebration—

Gethsemane Ev. Lutheran Church Saginaw, Michigan

Gethsemane Ev. Lutheran Church was organized on November 5, 1959 by members who had left the WELS, under the leadership of Pastor Otto J. Eckert, because of the false teaching concerning termination of church fellowship. There were 27 communicants. For three years services were held in rented facilities. In 1962 a worship home was dedicated to the glory of God, and in 1967 a three-bedroom parsonage was built and dedicated.

In April 1974 Pastor Eckert was delivered from this vale of tears to his heavenly home. Karl Brandle filled the vacancy for five months until Pastor David Schierenbeck was installed in August.



Interior of Gethsemane, Saginaw



Gethsemane Lutheran

In 1978 a new church was built and the old church was renovated into a parsonage. On June 10, 1979 the new church building was dedicated to God's glory.

In December 1981 the congregation resolved to begin a Christian Day School. Gethsemane School opened its doors in the fall of 1982 with Mr. Ross Roehl as its principal and only teacher. Enrollment was 14 students.

In June 1983 Pastor Schierenbeck accepted a call to Inver Grove Heights, Minn. Pastor Mark Bernthal was called and installed in August. A teacherage was built and dedicated on November 11, 1984, the 25th anniversary celebration of the congregation.

In 1991 a new three-classroom/bathrooms/principal's office/storage room addition was built.

In 1994 Mr. Roehl accepted the call to be principal/upper grade teacher of Luther Memorial Lutheran School in

Fond du Lac, Wis. Mr. Dan Barthels was called and installed in August as our new principal/upper grade teacher.

In February 1995 Assistant Pastor Karl Brandle was called to his heavenly home. Mr. Kurt Koenig was called as lower grade school teacher in the fall of 1995. In 1997 he accepted the call to be lower grade school teacher in Fond du Lac. Mrs. Debi Leinberger is our present lower grade school teacher and Mrs. Pam Reames is our kindergarten teacher. Other teachers of our school over the years have been Mrs. Lynette Roehl, Mrs. Elsie Godsey, Mrs. Ardith Zimmerman, and Mrs. Sherry Wielinski.

During the past 16 years the congregation has supported Pastor

Bernthal in outreach preaching stations at Tawas, Reed City, Cadillac, and Flint, Mich. as well as in Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio.

Today Gethsemane congregation numbers 255 souls and 200 communicants. There are 24 students in its Christian Day School.

"We thank and praise our Savior God for all the undeserved blessings which He has showered upon us as a congregation and as individuals over these past forty years. We look forward to His undeserved blessings for the future as we continue to serve the Lord and spread His Word of forgiveness and salvation through Jesus Christ."

—Pastor Mark Bernthal reporting



The CLC's preaching station in Onalaska, Wis. is an outreach effort of Messiah congregation, Eau Claire. This shows the group enjoying a July 11th picnic together. At the time, Prof. Mike Sydow served them. Pastor Paul Gurgel currently makes the weekly trip for their Sunday morning worship services. Attendance averages close to 20.



Announcements

CLC Teachers' Conference

Place: Immanuel Lutheran School, Mankato, Minnesota

Time: Wednesday-Friday, October 13-15, 1999, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Program:

* A study of Proverbs and applications for living today — Pastor Wayne Eichstadt

* Is there a proper use of rewards (special, privileges, material "prizes" etc.) in the Christian classroom? What does Scripture say about rewards, motivation? — Thomas Skinner

* Dealing with cliques, students who feel no one likes them, or feel other kids are picking on them — Barb Gurgel

* Methods for getting students to turn in

work on time, complete, and done well — Phillip Strike

* What constitutes teacher misconduct? — (Reassigned)

* Book Review: *Teaching Law and Gospel* by William E. Fischer — Pastor Paul D. Nolting

* Textbook Review: The new WELS curriculum (*Christ-Light*) — Pastor Em. L. D. Redlin

* Title Fives: Fun Nite Activities — Lane Fischer and Carrie Reim

* Title Fives: Suggestions for teaching good nutrition and personal hygiene, especially to 5th through 8th grade students — Laila Fleischer

* Title Fives: Physical Education Stuff — Donna Klammer

* Communion Service: Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.

—Leif Olmanson, Program Chairman

Installations

In accord with our usage and order, Wendy Greve, who was called by Faith Lutheran congregation of Coloma, Mich. to be lower grade teacher in its school, was installed on August 22, 1999.

—Pastor James Sandeen

In accord with our usage and order, Teresa Nelson, who was called by Luther Memorial congregation of Fond du Lac, Wis. to be lower grade teacher in its school, was installed on August 22, 1999.

—Pastor Michael Eichstadt

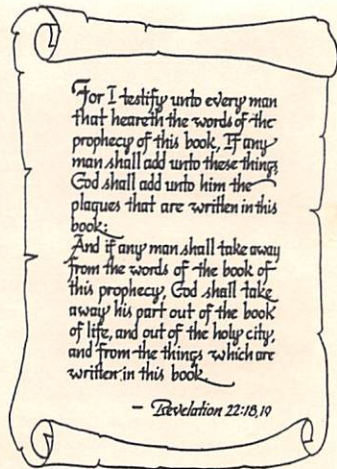
In accord with our usage and order, John H. Johannes, who was called to serve one year as pastor of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, was installed on July 18, 1999.

—Pastor Vance A. Fossum

ILC Regents Call for Nominations

The Board of Regents for Immanuel Lutheran College invites "all pastors, professors, male teachers, and voting members of member congregations of the Church of the Lutheran Confession" (CLC Constitution, Bylaw 8:B) to nominate an individual or individuals to fill the vacancy on the ILC faculty created by the retirement of Prof. Clifford Kuehne. The man nominated shall be a seminary-trained individual, who is qualified to teach Greek (grammar and New Testament exegesis) and Hebrew (grammar) on the college and seminary levels. He shall also have a minimum of eight years of experience in the pastoral ministry.

M/M Albert Gebhardt
811 S. Union Road
Spokane, WA 99206



Those placing nominations are encouraged to include information regarding their nominee's educational background and teaching experience. They may also indicate how their nominee(s) might help our school in supervising extracurricular activities or serving in administrative positions.

Please send your nominations, postmarked no later than September 21, 1999, to

Tom Beekman
ILC Board of Regents
8410 Rambil Rd.
Eau Claire, WI 54703