



The Reporter

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The Reporter

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“The Devil’s Deadly Deceptions”

by Pastor Proeber

We are familiar with 1st Peter 5:4: “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” Our Lord is very concerned about us and our life of faith. This is why he alerts us to the devil and the evil designs he has in store for us.

We know through the Scriptures the Lord went to great lengths to make us his. He gave up the full use of his power as God and became True Man. While this did not diminish his claim to be True God, it did place him under the requirements of the Law. This resulted in Jesus becoming our Substitute. As such he not only became obedient to the demands of the Law, he also obligated himself to suffer the curse and condemnation we brought upon ourselves by breaking God’s Law. It is a fact we can not ignore or dismiss: Jesus did not sin, we did. As the prophet Isaiah reminds us, it was our sins and our transgressions which brought Jesus to his suffering and death (*Isaiah 53:5-6*).

Because of this incredible and gracious work

accomplished by Jesus as True God and True Man, we are forgiven. We are also set free from the devil’s tyranny. This truth of God’s undeserved love and rescue through Jesus galls the devil. He rants. He raves. He refuses to relinquish control. So he engages in his deadly deceptions. His goal is to recapture our hearts and minds, and make us subservient to his will as we were in the past.

Certainly our Lord has given us the means to resist him (*1 Peter 5:9*). He also gives us the weapons with which to fight and defeat him (*Ephesians 6:10-18*). He even instructs us how we can keep ourselves free from becoming entangled in the devil’s deadly web of sin (*Titus 2:11-12*). Every weapon and means to defeat the devil is at our disposal. Unfortunately we do not take the battle seriously. Nor do we always prepare ourselves to fight the good fight of faith.

Our weakness and our lack of preparation is the result of our sinful flesh. It always remains with us, and it always keeps an

open ear, eye and mind to everything the devil offers. Our sinful state also affects our hearts keeping a space open for the devil’s deadly desires to take hold.

This is one of the deadliest deceptions we will have to endure, and it is found in each of us. All too often, and all too easily, we are led away from our Lord, his Word and his Sacraments. We are deceived into thinking, “I’m alright the way I am.” So we allow other events, opportunities, and pursuits to take precedence. In the end, we neglect what God lovingly offers in exchange for an illusion of enjoyment. Slowly, but surely, we are committing spiritual suicide. While our absence from Word and Sacrament does not force God to reduce us to a pile of smoldering ash, it does lead us to be separated from him and from the direction his Word provides. The consequence of this action is usually the question, “Where are you, Lord, when I need you?” This is the desired result of the devil’s deadly deception.

Another deception is

In this Issue:

God’s Imagery Quiz— Part I	3
Food for Thought	3
All the Days of Your Life...	4
Outreach News / Easter Plans	5
March Birthdays	5
Notes & News	6
Reporters & Meetings	7
Devotion	8

Deceptions, from page 1

the influence of the world's morality and the justification for accepting its questionable standards. I must admit it is painful to watch most television programming, let alone to even imagine what is available on the internet. Open sexual content, graphic violence, and the rejection of God's design for the family—this is what modern media boasts is quality entertainment. The devil's deadly deception draws us into this world. We are to watch everything contentedly, and blissfully accept the dysfunctional and ungodly portrayal of life as normal. In time, and without discernment and discretion, the world's norm will affect us. We need to constantly be on our guard because ever so subtly the devil seeks to seize control, and desires to put us on the path which leads us away from the Lord.

There are many other deceptions which will plague us. Some are common to all people, others are particular to us as individuals. This is why we need to recognize the devil's deceptions for what they are. We also need to steer clear of any justification which would allow us to accept them as permissible. Of even greater importance, we need to remember Jesus' description of our life in this world:

"They are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." *(John 17:14-17)*

To this we can also add Peter's description of the Christian life:

"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God . . . Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in this world, to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul." *(1 Peter 2:9-10, 11)*

Both of these passages, along with many others in the Bible, make us address the question, "Who am I?" Or more important, "What am I?" There are only two answers. Either I am a faithful child of God, or I am a deceived and dying slave of the devil. Certainly some might argue that there should be more options or latitude, but is there really anything to debate? We are children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. There is no other way than the one God has provided and revealed in his Son. Some may try to add good works or even good intentions, but these are only another deception used by the devil to distract from the truth. On the other hand, what are we if we are not the children of God? Is there some sort of middle ground where God allows people to exist—neither saved nor condemned? Try as one might, this condition or place does not exist. This is why it is important to not only confess I am a child of God, but to live my life giving ample evidence of that confession. Still we struggle because we recognize we are sinner-saints, and we know from experience how accurate Paul's description was concerning this struggle:

"I know that nothing good lives in me, that is in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing . . . it is sin living in me that does it." *(Romans 7:18—20)*

Yet in this struggle we cannot blithely say, "Well, God is just going to have to forgive me and accept me for whom I am!" This cavalier attitude is just one more of the devil's deadly deceptions. It is his desire to make us question God's seriousness regarding a life of undivided love and uncompromised faithfulness.

Because we are always under attack and the devil is always whispering in our ears, we need to commit ourselves to know and follow the Gospel's loving imperatives. These commands are generously scattered throughout the New Testament, and they are included for our encouragement and strength. They help us recognize the danger of the devil's deadly deceptions. They also help us resist them with the strength and the victory our Savior gives.



God's Imagery, Part 1

by Alan Todd

God often uses imagery when he speaks to us in his word.

God's Imagery is also the title of the latest book by Pastor Joel Seifert (subtitled "Interpreting Scripture's Symbols, Parables, and Word Pictures") in Northwestern Publishing House's Discovery series. A review of that book is forthcoming in a future Newsletter.

In the meantime, below I invite you to test your knowledge regarding Scripture's symbolic numbers that Pastor Seifert expands upon, *inter-alia*, in his book.

Match the number in the left column with what that number is associated with in the Bible. (Also, recall the meaning of the words "associated" and "symbolic").

<u>SYMBOLIC NUMBER</u>	<u>ASSOCIATED WITH:</u>
3 _____	A. THE CHURCH
4 _____	B. COMPLETENESS
7 _____	C. GOD
10 _____	D. EARTH OR MANKIND
12 _____	E. HOLY SPIRIT
40 _____	F. COMPLETE NUMBER OF ALL BELIEVERS
144,000 _____	G. PERIOD OF TESTING AND STRUGGLING

April's *Reporter* will have the answers that Pastor Seifert explains in his book which will be the final authority for this particular quiz.

If you just can't wait for the next *Reporter*, please feel free to search the Bible or purchase *God's Imagery* at Northwestern Publishing House.

Food for Thought, and Faith

"That a man should rise from the dead after three days is, as we have said, certainly improbable; but we are not concerned with a man, but *this* man. There are many other things recorded of this man which, in isolation, are equally improbable—His virginal conception, His life and works—but in Him all these improbabilities coincide. Does the coincidence of the improbabilities amount to sheer impossibility, so that we conclude the picture of Jesus in the Scripture is a cunningly wrought invention? Or is the picture that of God incarnate, in whom the "improbabilities" coincide like a three-fold cord that is not easily broken? That God incarnate should enter human life in a unique way is not improbable, but perfectly fitting. That God incarnate should live a life of perfect holiness, marked by works of miraculous power and teaching of pre-eminent wisdom, is not improbable, but just what we should expect. That God incarnate should die—there is something to the highest degree amazing. Die he did, none the less; but this could not be the end. We have seen this act in the drama of our salvation, we wait breathlessly for the sequel, and greet it as something divinely natural: This is the one whom "God raised up, loosing the bonds of death, because it was not possible that death should hold him fast."

From F.F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*, page 69



WALK THEN
AS CHILDREN
OF LIGHT,
FOR THE FRUIT
OF THE
LIGHT IS IN
GOODNESS
AND JUSTICE
AND TRUTH

All The Days of Your Life...

by Carl Schueler

“All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” *Psalm 139:16 NIV*

Wow! All I can say is, Wow! That’s one eye-popping, profound verse! Think for a few minutes about some implications of this short verse:

1. Before any of us was born—before any of us was *conceived* in the womb—our lives were laid out before us including the precise number of days to the last day we would draw a breath.
2. Not only before conception, but in eternity, as the Lord is eternal and omniscient from eternity—indeed, before time began, before the creation of the universe, we were individually known.
3. Not only the number of our days, but the details of each day were known, as the Lord told his disciples “the very hairs on your head are numbered.” As the number of hairs on one’s head changes over time—typically decreasing—that means each day’s events were known, down to the finest detail, and moment by moment, as the number of hairs on one’s head changes not only day to day, but also often moment to moment.
4. Who we meet and when, what we say and when, what we think and when, what we do and when, what is done to us and when, what we see and when, what we hear and when, what we eat and drink and when, day by day, all “ordained” and “written” before time began.

This demands God’s omniscience. Recall the Lord told Moses to tell the Israelites that “I Am” sent Moses to them. “I Am” is consistent with God’s foreknowledge of each of us in eternity. In an ever-changing universe, nothing “is.” No one “is.” No one save God can say “I Am” except for a fleeting moment.

I look in the mirror. I glance away. I look again. I’ve *changed*. Even if I look away for a fraction of a second! My facial expression is different. So I’m different.

Not so with God. He is the same, past, present, future—the same in eternity—He “is.” Consider that who He is includes what and who he knows. Even that cannot ever change—the Lord can never learn anything new. He must know all (i.e., he is “omniscient”) from eternity, including all there is to know about creation, which includes each of us from the first day to the last.

Combine that with a few of the Lord’s promises to a believer such as: “Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you” and “The Lord works all things for the good of those who love Him” and “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.”

His promise of Heaven to a believer is assured because He is faithful to His promises—not, thankfully, based on the believer’s faithfulness. So when a believer’s circumstances may seem “bad” in health or wealth or something else, or the believer’s faith falters in sinful thought or action, the believer is comforted in repentance to recognize and rejoice that the future—especially in eternity—must yet be “A-okay.”



“**A** farmer went out to sow his seed.”

Outreach Opportunities

“Why would you want to invite a person to a mid-week Lenten service? They are such downers! The only thing you hear about is sin and death and punishment!” I remember once hearing this response in the early part of my ministry. Initially it caught me off-guard, but I soon recovered and followed with another question. “Why wouldn’t you want to invite a person to a mid-week Lenten service?” My purpose was not to put that person on the spot, but to make them think about the importance of Lent.

Certainly, there is no masking the message of Lent which could accurately be called the message of the cross. Jesus went to the cross to carry the burden and punishment of our sin. Without a clear understanding of our need for a Savior, we would never appreciate what Jesus did for us.

This is a message all need to hear, and during a mid-week service that message can be heard in its simplicity and clarity. There is no confusion regarding why we hold these services, or why we need to attend them.

Make it a point to come. In addition, make it a point to invite someone to come with you. That simple invitation might be the very thing that person needs in their life.

Looking forward, Holy Week and Easter services are planned for April. More information will be coming on those services, and how you can invite others to come and see the great things God has done in Christ.

Easter Worship Plans

As we look ahead to the celebration of the resurrection, there are a couple of areas where help will be needed. First, there is the brunch which follows the morning worship service. We will need people to provide food items. We will also need people to help with set up and clean up of the fellowship hall. Second, we will need plants for our Memory Garden which beautifies the altar. Please consider an Easter lily or another type of spring flower to thank the Lord for his gift of life.

Finally, prior to Holy Week we are planning to get door hangers into the community. There are some new areas which are being considered, still we will need people to assemble the bags and distribute the bags. The goal this year is to put out a minimum of 500 bags, more if we can. There will also be “invitation cards” available which you can share with your friends, neighbors, etc.

March Birthdays

We rejoice in the many blessings God has given the members of our family of faith. May the Lord continue to bless them richly.

9 th	Frank F.
12 th	Zach W.
16 th	Kallie H.
28 th	Chris M.



Notes & News

Wednesday Evening Bible Class

The regularly scheduled evening Bible Class will be replaced by mid-week Lenten worship services. Make these services a part of your regular routine. Come to the cross of your Savior for the answers to life's questions.

The 7:00 pm Bible Class will resume after Easter, with the study of the Acts of the Apostles, or as it is sometimes known, the Acts of the Holy Spirit. Topics will range from the conversation of Saul through the missionary journeys of Paul, and finally his imprisonment.

A DVD on the Book of Acts will also be shown to bring a visual concept to this book on the spread of the Gospel and Christ's Church.

Sunday Morning Bible Class

There is always a Bible Class following the worship service. This 11:00 am class alternates between the Bible and other related topics. Recently the Augsburg Confession was studied along with its historical significance to the 21st Century Lutheran Confession Church. Currently the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 6—8 is being considered.

Later this month a new study will focus on the book of C.S. Lewis, "Mere Christianity."

It is a timeless classic which provides much needed answers and help in explaining the Christian faith. The study will cover six weeks and will utilize a DVD presentation, as well as sections from the book.

Sunday School for Children

We are grateful for the dedicated staff of teachers who make Sunday School possible for our children. They prepare lessons weekly, and the benefits are being seen in what the children have come to know about their Savior and God's Word.

If you could offer some time, at least once a month, or once every 3 months, please speak with John Favuzzi for more information.

Sunday School is formally offered every third Sunday of the month.

Music

Both the handbell and adult choirs continue to practice and prepare for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. As a congregation we are grateful for the efforts of those who organize and offer their time in this service to the Lord and the members of Our Redeemer.

Other Opportunities

We are always looking for new opportunities for service, outreach, study and encouragement. Please share your ideas with a Board member or with Pastor Proeber.

Church Council: Servant—Leaders

There is a great deal of work which takes place "behind the scenes." This is accomplished by the members of our Church Council and its standing committees. Without their service and dedication, we would not be able to organize, evaluate, and carry out the ministry we do.

Keep these men in your prayers, asking the Lord to give them strength, wisdom, and zeal to faithfully perform their duties.

In addition, support these men in their service through your faithful offerings to the Lord, as well as by your time cheerfully and generously given.

The membership of the Church Council is:

Elders

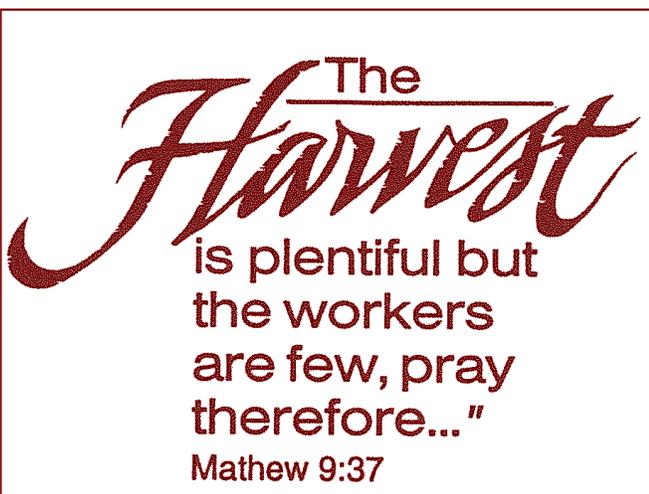
Jacob Martin
Erle Pettus
Dave Vetter

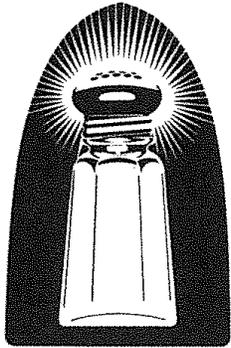
Education

John Favuzzi
Joel Degner
Daniel Grunewald

Trustees

Jim Brown
Jim Everson
Al Todd





You are the
SALT
of the earth.

Matthew 5:13a

Reporters Wanted

Book review? Personal Story of Faith?
Event report? Potluck-gathering? Party? Field Trip?

Half-page to three pages
Reviewed for scriptural consistency
Due by 25th of month to appear in next issue

Hard-copy to Carl Schueler, or email to Carl Schueler (cfs_home@hotmail.com)
or Pastor Proeber (pastor@orlcsb.net)

A simple and rewarding way to serve!

Thanks to Al and Carl for their articles this month on “God’s Imagery” and “All the Days of Your Life.”

There is a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past volumes, articles authored by members have really made every issue more interesting. We pray that every member will provide an article for 2014. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please don’t hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber or Carl Schueler for advice. Thanks!

Meetings for March

Remember, the Church Council and Committees will meet on March 4th. The Committees will meet from 7:00—8:00 pm, and the full Council will meet from 8:00—9:00 pm.

If you have a question regarding a specific area of ministry, please contact a member of the appropriate Board. He will be happy to help.

Lenten Worship

On Ash Wednesday, **March 5th at 7:00 pm**, we will begin six weeks of mid-week services. These special evening services will direct our attention to our Savior and the way he showed his love to us. We know that love was manifested in going to the cross, but his love is also seen in the way he answers other plaguing questions we have in this life.

Come and learn more about the loving answers our Lord provides!

Lord, To Whom Shall We Flee —

March 5th	When my Enemy Accuses me?
March 12th	When my Flesh Deceives me?
March 19th	When my World Distracts me?
March 26th	When my Guilt Overwhelms me?
April 2nd	When my Fears Paralyze me?
April 9th	When my Death Terrifies me?

Devotional Corner

"Safe"

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. Matthew 4:1

Every time I pray the Lord's Prayer (*Matthew 6:9-13*), I find great comfort in the words, "And lead us not into temptation." I need this reassurance because there are many things which seek to draw me away from the Lord. The world always beckons with its pleasures. The devil always offers illusions and distractions. My flesh is always attentive to their appealing call. My only refuge is knowing the Lord will keep me safe in every time of temptation, and that refuge is found in my Savior Jesus Christ.

At the beginning of his ministry God the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness of Judea. The sole purpose was to engage in hand to hand combat with the devil. Forty days and forty nights he endured the devil's twisted truths, his easy solutions, and his deceptive offers. Through the power of God's Word, Jesus was victorious and did not sin.

I am the beneficiary of this hard fought battle. Because Jesus overcame every temptation, he gives me the ability to resist the devil's destructive advances. He also gives me the wisdom to identify Satan's deadly deceptions. He even gives me the strength to faithfully endure every cunning attack.

I can find great comfort in knowing Jesus will keep me safe. I find equal comfort in knowing when I fail to resist temptation, Jesus stands ready to rescue me. He forgives my failure to remain faithful and removes the burden of my guilt. He encourages me with his reassuring promises to retake my stand on God's Word. He even renews me with his victory to prepare me for the next battle.

I know as long as I live in this world, the devil will always be there to tempt me. I also know I need to be ready to identify these temptations so I can resist them. What gives me courage and strength for the battle is knowing Jesus is there to keep me safe.

Prayer

O gracious and faithful Savior, you were strong and faithful in the face of every temptation. Give me the same strength and faith to resist the devil's attacks. Refresh me when I grow weak. Forgive me when I fall. Keep me safely in your care. Amen.

Daily devotions can be accessed through www.whataboutjesus.com or www.wels.net. Please follow the instructions to view daily devotions and to subscribe to them. They are also available as "podcasts."