



A Word from Pastor Schielke

Gnosticism – What is it, and who cares? Part 3.

For the last two months, we've considered the teachings of Gnosticism (pronounced – NOSS-ti-cism) and how Gnostic ideas permeate modern "spirituality." A very simple summary of Gnostic thought: spirit good, matter evil. This basic tenet underlies most of the other Christian heresies that Gnosticism promotes.

Early Christians influenced by Gnosticism borrowed the idea of redemption through Christ, but rather than believing that He redeemed mankind from sin, they believed that He would redeem them from matter - that is, from human flesh, which they considered to be inherently evil. At the core of Gnosticism is the belief that knowledge, typically secret knowledge - knowledge from angels, from the stars and planets, from the ancients - was the path to salvation. They believed that the path of redemption was through knowledge and that the worst evil was ignorance. Thus, sin is not the problem that Jesus came to deal through His death but lack of knowledge.

Gnostic thought precedes Christianity. There have been Gnostics since the early days of mankind. But Gnostic thought

quickly found its way into Christianity so quickly that even some of the writers of the New Testament make statements against early versions of it. The most prominent examples of New Testament writers targeting Gnostic thought are in the 1st and 2nd Epistles of John, 2nd Peter, and Paul's letters to the Galatians, Colossians, and Timothy.

1st John 4:2-3 says, "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God." "In the flesh," is the key phrase here. Since Gnostics consider flesh to be evil, then Jesus, if He is the savior, could not have actually taken on flesh. Either His flesh was an illusion or an outright lie. John asserts that the flesh of Jesus Christ is real human flesh. This is reiterated in 2nd John 7, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist."

In Colossians 1, Paul writes about Jesus, "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or

dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were created through him and for him." In Gnostic thought, an evil god created the physical world, and Jesus Christ is a representative of the good god of the spiritual realm. However, Paul says the Son of God was involved in creating all things, both physical and spiritual. In 1st Timothy, Paul attacks the false knowledge of early Gnostic teachers, "O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called 'knowledge' (1st Tim. 6:20). Paul consistently teaches that the wisdom of God is contained within God's word made manifest in the flesh of Jesus.

The Apostles were concerned about the false teachings of Gnosticism, and those false ideas are still present in Christianity today. We must remain vigilant to keep our focus on Jesus and his saving work and the truth we find in God's Holy Word. The One true God has come in the flesh in the person of Jesus to die for our sins in the flesh and rise from the dead in the flesh. Thanks be to God!

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 15:57

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The Formula of Concord - The Formula of Concord (FC) was the last of the confessional documents written by the Lutherans in the 16th century. Finished in 1577, the FC consists of twelve articles presented in two parts. The first part, the Epitome, is a brief presentation of each point of doctrine and the controversy surrounding it while the Solid Declaration presents a more detailed discussion. Over a dozen authors contributed portions of draft versions of the FC, but the most influential authors of the final document were Jakob Andrea and Martin Chemnitz. The need for the FC arose after the death of Martin Luther in 1546. Over time, the Lutherans became divided over several points of doctrine. Several political peace treaties also forced the Lutherans to entertain and accept certain points of Reformed theology which had been developing in Switzerland. Thus, the FC was pivotal in clarifying the Lutheran position over and against both the Roman Catholic position and more significantly, over the Reformed position. It is the FC that most clearly distinguishes Lutheran teaching on several important points and against the various Protestant bodies we see around us even today. Over the next months, you will find the articles of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord in our newsletter. It's good for all of us to have at least some familiarity with this important doctrinal statement.

I - Original Sin The Principal Question in This Controversy.

¹ Whether original sin is properly and without any distinction man's corrupt nature, substance, and essence, or at any rate the principal and best part of his essence [substance], namely, the rational soul itself in its highest state and powers; or whether, even after the Fall, there is a distinction between man's substance, nature, essence, body, soul, and original sin, so that the nature [itself] is one thing, and original sin, which inheres in the corrupt nature and corrupts the nature, another.

Affirmative Theses.

The Pure Doctrine, Faith, and Confession according to the Aforesaid Standard and Summary Declaration.

² 1. We believe, teach, and confess that there is a distinction between man's nature, not only as he was originally created by God pure and holy and without sin, but also as we have it [that nature] now after the Fall, namely, between the nature [itself], which even after the Fall is and remains a creature of God, and original sin, and that this distinction is as great as the distinction between a work of God and a work of the devil.

³ 2. We believe, teach, and confess also that this distinction should be maintained with the greatest care, because this doctrine, that no distinction is to be made between our corrupt human nature and original sin, conflicts with the chief articles of our Christian faith concerning creation, redemption, sanctification, and the resurrection of our body, and cannot coexist therewith.

⁴ For God created not only the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the Fall, but also our bodies and souls after the Fall, notwithstanding that they are corrupt, which God also still acknowledges as His work, as it is written Job 10:8: Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about. Deut. 32:18; Is. 45:9ff; 54:5; 64:8; Acts 17:28; Job 10:8; Ps. 100:3; 139:14; Eccl. 12:1.

⁵ Moreover, the Son of God has assumed this human nature, however, without sin, and therefore not a foreign, but our own flesh, into the unity of His person, and according to it is become our true Brother. Heb. 2:14: Forasmuch, then, as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same. Again, 16; 4:15: He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, yet without sin.

⁶ In like manner Christ has also redeemed it as His work, sanctifies it as His work, raises it from the dead, and gloriously adorns it as His work. But original sin He has not created, assumed, redeemed, sanctified; nor will He raise it, will neither adorn nor save it in the elect, but in the [blessed] resurrection it will be entirely destroyed.

⁷ Hence the distinction between the corrupt nature and the corruption which infects the nature and by which the nature became corrupt, can easily be discerned.

The Formula of Concord is continued on page 3.

Victory in Christ Lutheran Church
July 2023

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 15:57



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	3	4 	5	6	7	8
9 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	10	11 Women's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.	12	13	14	15 Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.
16 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	17	18 Women's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.	19	20	21	22
23 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	24	25 Women's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.	26	27	28	29 Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.
30 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon Voters' Meeting	31					

The Formula of Concord continued from page 2.

⁸ 3. But, on the other hand, we believe, teach, and confess that original sin is not a slight, but so deep a corruption of human nature that nothing healthy or uncorrupt has remained in man's body or soul, in his inner or outward powers, but, as the Church sings:

Through Adam's fall is all corrupt,
Nature and essence human.

⁹ This damage is unspeakable, and cannot be discerned by reason, but only from God's Word.

¹⁰ And [we affirm] that no one but God alone can separate from one another the nature and this corruption of the nature, which will fully come to pass through death, in the [blessed] resurrection, where our nature which we now bear will rise and live eternally without original sin and separated and sundered from it, as it is written Job 19:26: I shall be compassed again with this my skin, and in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold.

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July Birthdays:

- 1 Aria Higby
- 12 Lori Rohloff
- 14 Orion Ward
- 17 Bobbie Sherrod
- 19 Grace Metoxen
- 22 Matt Moll
- 23 Theresa Rohloff
- 25 Wyatt Safford
- 30 Azarah Menendez



July Anniversary:

- 20 Randy and Brenda VanDekerkhove

For 2023, I would like to challenge every member of this congregation to read or continue reading through the Bible in one year. The Bible readings for July and part of August are listed below.

July 1: Psalms 90-95	July 14: Prov. 4-6	July 27: Song of Solomon
July 2: Psalms 96-102	July 15: Prov. 7-9	July 28: Isa. 1-4
July 3: Psalms 103-105	July 16: Prov. 10-12	July 29: Isa. 5-8
July 4: Psalms 106-107	July 17: Prov. 13-15	July 30: Isa. 9-12
July 5: Psalms 108-114	July 18: Prov. 16-18	July 31: Isa. 13-17
July 6: Psalms 115-118	July 19: Prov. 19-21	Aug. 1: Isa. 18-22
July 7: Psalm 119	July 20: Prov. 22-23	Aug. 2: Isa. 23-27
July 8: Psalms 120-125	July 21: Prov. 24-26	Aug. 3: Isa. 28-30
July 9: Psalms 126-132	July 22: Prov. 27-29	Aug. 4: Isa. 31-35
July 10: Psalms 133-139	July 23: Prov. 30-31	Aug. 5: Isa. 36-41
July 11: Psalms 140-145	July 24: Eccl. 1-4	Aug. 6: Isa. 42-44
July 12: Psalms 146-150	July 25: Eccl. 5-8	Aug. 7: Isa. 45-48
July 13: Prov. 1-3	July 26: Eccl. 9-12	Aug. 8: Isa. 49-53

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