

“Afraid” by Robert H. Bennett

A look at demonic activity and exorcism through the only One who can defeat all demons.

1. The devil is the father of _____ . What would you say his kingdom is built upon?

John 8:44

Gen. 3:13

2 Cor. 11:14

Matt. 10:28

2. What is the only way to know God and His motivation toward us?

We derive our understanding from what God says.

“Outside the truth of Jesus’ sacrificial life and death for fallen humanity, only fear can exist.... God remains a hidden God, who seems to be unjust and unloving. He seems to be a God who acts inconsistently throughout history. Throughout time, such an understanding of God has resulted in a spirituality called animism” (p.10).

Without God’s revelation of himself, man will seek or fashion a “creator-god” that does not have a direct connection with the daily events of creation. “The animistic worldview finds a spiritual reality or essence, in many aspects of the world – seen and unseen – around them, whether plants, animals, objects or ‘phenomena’” (p.10).

The author suggests that America is moving away from a scientific approach and returning to the realm of spirituality. Popular topics or interests that are eventually considered a spiritual entity: ghosts, spirits, aliens from other planets, Bigfoot, or other strange creatures.

3. The book “Afraid” presents case studies that show the power of Jesus’ name attached to the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments.
 - 1) “Most spiritual and demonic problems can be alleviated through the simple act of individual Confession and Absolution” (p.12).
 - 2) Holy Baptism provides a great blessing. However, it results in becoming a target for the devil. Despite this paradox, we rely upon divine protection. The danger always exists (1 Peter 5:8-9), but we are not afraid because we bear the mark of our God and live with the promise of protection and the life He provides. Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:4-5.

- 3) Jesus is always spiritually present, but Holy Communion provides the concrete presence of Jesus through the body and blood that are truly present. This is where sacramental theology provides great comfort.

Satan cannot bear to remain where Jesus and His three gifts are. “God chooses how and when to apply the promises of His holy things. This is important to understand so that when you struggle with the devil, yet fail to receive instant relief, you don’t fall into greater despair” (p.13-14). See 2 Cor.12:1-10 for a strong example of our need to trust and rely upon God’s good and gracious will. All of us need to be reminded of the lifelong benefits of Baptism and the promise of forgiveness of sins, especially in the Lord’s Supper. Jesus has promised to be in these things personally. This is reassuring, since Jesus is the only exorcist.

4. One story, but not isolated (p.19-23, 23-24 top, 25 para.1 – 26 para.1)

“The Lutheran Rite of Confession and Absolution empties the devil’s arsenal of tricks by taking all of the requirements of Absolution away from the person hearing the Words of Absolution and placing them into the hands of the Savior. ‘You are forgiven; go in peace.’ This is the absolution that Jill needed to hear...” (p.26-27)

1 John 3:8

1 Peter 5:8

Ephesians 6:12

There is a danger of making prayer into an idol. See page 29 para. 1-2.

“After all the years of trying to face these spirits on her own, Jill finally recognized that she was powerless on her own. But she wasn’t on her own: now she knew that God was with her” (p.31).

Matt. 12:29

LSB #666 “O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe” (see next page if you do not have a hymnal)

Jesus finally became the focus of her prayers as she spoke to Him and trusted His protection. “It all makes sense now. Jesus is with me, so I don’t have to be afraid.”

1 John 4:16-18

(Study questions are also included at the end of each chapter.)

O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe (LSB #666)

- 1 O little flock, fear not the foe
Who madly seeks your overthrow;
Dread not his rage and pow'r.
And though your courage sometimes faints,
His seeming triumph o'er God's saints
Lasts but a little hour.
- 2 Be of good cheer; your cause belongs
To Him who can avenge your wrongs;
Leave it to Him, our Lord.
Though hidden yet from mortal eyes,
His Gideon shall for you arise,
Uphold you and His Word.
- 3 As true as God's own Word is true,
Not earth nor hell's satanic crew
Against us shall prevail.
Their might? A joke, a mere facade!
God is with us and we with God—
Our vict'ry cannot fail.
- 4 Amen, Lord Jesus, grant our prayer;
Great Captain, now Thine arm make bare,
Fight for us once again!
So shall Thy saints and martyrs raise
A mighty chorus to Thy praise
Forevermore. Amen.

1. How does Confession and Absolution come into play in the midst of spiritual warfare?

2. What role can catechesis play in the midst of spiritual warfare?

3. What does “prosperity preaching” teach? How did the prosperity preaching that Jill encountered help lead her into the spiritual darkness she endured?

4. Hear an example of what Martin Luther provided as how to deal with demonic assault. P. 24

5. Read Mark 9:14-29 Why were the disciples unable to drive out the demon?

6. What does the term necromancy mean? (p.52) Read
 - a. Lev. 19:31; 20:6; 20:27; *“Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.” “I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people.” “.... Must put to death a medium or spiritist....”*
 - b. Deut. 18:9-12; Do not imitate the detestable ways of the nations...do not sacrifice your children...do not practice divination or sorcery, interpret omens, engage in witchcraft, or cast spells, do not serve as a medium or spiritist
 - c. 1 John 4:1; *“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”* read further on how to know the Spirit of God.
 - d. Isaiah 8:19; *“When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?”*
 - e. 1 Tim. 4:1; *“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”*
 - f. 2 Cor. 11:14 The devil can masquerade as an angel of light.