



REFORMED

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*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;
he shall set me up upon a rock.
—Psalm 27:5*

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Editor: Rev. Andrew Lanning
From the Ramparts Editor: Dewey Engelsma

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MEDITATION

Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

—Exodus 23:9

Love for the Stranger

God's people have a distinct calling toward the stranger. Negatively, their calling is that they "not oppress a stranger." Positively, their calling is that they count the stranger "as one born among you" and that they "love him as thyself" (Lev. 19:33–34).

The Old Testament stranger was that man who was not an Israelite but whose providential circumstances required him to live among the children of Israel for a time. Perhaps there was a famine in the stranger's land, so that he fled to Israel for sustenance. Perhaps there was war and oppression in the stranger's land, so that he fled to Israel for safety. However he came to Israel, the stranger was a foreigner from another nation who must dwell among the people of Israel for a time.

During the time of his sojourn, the stranger remained a stranger in Israel. Though the stranger was required to observe the sabbaths with his hosts (Ex. 20:10) and was required to put away leaven at the time of the passover (12:19), the stranger was not permitted to eat the passover (12:43), nor to partake in the other feasts (29:33). The stranger, living within Israel due to his God-given circumstances, was not an Israelite but a stranger.

The New Testament equivalent of the stranger is those people throughout the history of the church who are not yet members of a true church institute but who sojourn among the church. Perhaps there was a famine of the word in the stranger's former church home, so that he fled to the true church for sustenance. Perhaps

there was war and oppression of men in the stranger's former church home, so that he fled to the true church for safety. Or perhaps the stranger was newly converted from heathendom and unbelief and was being disciplined toward membership in the church.

The calling of God's people toward such a stranger is that they love him; count him as one born among them; vex him not, nor oppress him; and deal with him as they would be dealt with.

And why should the people of God deal thus with the stranger? Because God's people are always strangers upon this earth. So the patriarchs had been in Canaan: they "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13). So Israel had been in Egypt: "for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 23:9). So the Gentiles had been from the household of God: "at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). So the early church was: "Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (I Pet. 1:1). So God's people always are: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims" (2:11).

And what has God done for his elect stranger, estranged from God by nature and an alien from God's church? Why, he has loved the stranger, brought him into his own house,

counted him as one born there, and given him to Jesus Christ. “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph. 2:19–20). In the wonder of

his covenant love, God has brought his people to himself, so that, although they are estranged from the world, “ye are strangers and sojourners with me” (Lev. 25:23).

And now, you strangers and foreigners, who belong to God by his grace in Christ, oppress not the stranger among you.

—AL



Two Free Public Lectures

Speech One:

THE SOVEREIGN GOD OF SALVATION

How can a sinner be saved? That question is not hypothetical but very personal and real. It is not a question about some person somewhere – how can he be saved? Rather, it is a question about you; it is a question about me. How can you be saved? How can I be saved? There are really only two possible answers to that question. Either God saves us, or we save ourselves. Either God is the Saviour, or Man is the Saviour. Either God is sovereign, or Man is sovereign. Either God is God, or Man is God. If I must save myself, even by the smallest contribution, then I am lost. But if God saves me, completely and fully, then I am saved, indeed.

Thanks be to God that God is God and that He sovereignly saves His people through Jesus Christ. On Saturday, 7 June, join us for a lecture on this most comforting truth of God's sovereignty in salvation.

Theme: The Sovereign God of Salvation
Speaker: Rev. Andrew Lanning

Date: 7 June 2025 (Saturday)
Time: 10 AM

Speech Two:

THE PSALMS OF JESUS

God gave His people a lovely song book called The Psalms. The book of Psalms opens with a resounding blessing: "Blessed is the man" (Psalm 1:1). The book of Psalms closes with a ringing doxology: "Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 150:6). In between are all the things that belong to God's people in this life -- joys and sorrows, sin and righteousness, suffering and victory, death and life. No matter what God's people are going through, the Psalms help them give voice to it. What makes the book of Psalms especially lovely is that the Psalms are Jesus' songs. Jesus is the blessed man of the opening blessing and Jesus praises God in the closing doxology. All the things in between that belong to God's people in this life first belonged to Jesus -- joys and sorrows, sin and righteousness, suffering and victory, death and life.

What a lovely song book God has given us: the Psalms of the blessed man for the praise of God! On Saturday, 14 June, join us for a lecture on this most lovely book of Psalms.

Theme: The Psalms of Jesus
Speaker: Rev. Andrew Lanning

Date: 14 June 2025 (Saturday)
Time: 10 AM

Venue: 371 Beach Road, #02-42, City Gate, Singapore 199597

Directions: Nicoll Highway MRT (Yellow Circle Line), From MRT station, walk along link bridge to City Gate

Programme: Lecture followed by Q&A, fellowship and refreshments

Organiser: Remnant Reformed Church and Redeemed Reformed Fellowship

Article CXIII: Dr. Janssen's Notes (continued)

As to Israel's conception of God till the time of the prophets the notes contain the following:

"Names of Canaanitish kings point to the fact that there is such a thing as a worship of God. 'My king is god,' although this does not prove monotheism. But it shows that all gods can be brought to one unity, an Eli. Hence, there is such a conception as God among the Babylonians. This El or Eljon means "the highest." Has no proper name therefore. Proves a relative monotheism. But does not prove that you have no gods besides the true God. This is also the idea of Israel until the prophets."

The same statement is found in a different connection: "Throughout the centuries to exile even the Israelites clung to semi-monotheism."

The meaning is clear. Israel's conception of God was such that there were many gods, but Jehovah was the highest god among them all! It was not till the time of the prophets that they were cured of this false conception.

In connection with the history of Samson the statement is made: "These accounts are not important historical accounts, but current and oral traditions of the experience of an individual. There is often an element of exaggeration. We find this also in the New Testament. Sometimes a correction is added. Literalness should not always be pressed."

To me this amounts to the same thing as if the professor had said that the book of Judges is not true. What is the place of it in the Word of God? Does the Holy Spirit deliberately present things as history that are not?

Of David's plan to build a temple unto the Lord the notes offer the following interpretation:

"David's ambition along political and religious lines runs sky high. Wishes elaborate structure for ark. Why sudden plans for temple and palace? As proof of power and to gain power. United tribes have risen to world-power. Rising to world-power carries with it a change of religious affairs also.

"David has seen things in other capitol, especially elaborate temple of Dagon with galleries. Gives him an idea for innovations along political and religious lines.

"David first interrogates instruments of prophecy for religious plans, not regarding palace or other plans. Feels innovation in realm of religion delicate and radical. David warned by Saul's downfall not to come into conflict with prophets. At first interview the prophet says: go ahead. Then hesitation—a vision from Jhvh—and instructs David to abandon plan."

Then a little further:

"Why is David forbidden to rear temple? Prophets are very conservative. Prophet says that from earliest times Jhvh lived in tent. Harps back to Mosaic customs. Prophets want to perpetuate Mosaic forms of worship. But David wants temple. But building must be postponed; looks like compromise. David is out and out progressive. He wants new things, providing they pertain to nonessentials."

Is that the Word of God? David wants a temple to gain world-power! He got the idea from the temples of Dagon? He is afraid of the prophets! The conservatism of the prophets prevent it! This should be a theological interpretation of Scripture? It tells us that David was the man after God's heart. His love for Jehovah is prompting him. He seeks the prophets because

he wants to know the will of God, not because he is afraid of his downfall. And he is forbidden to rear the temple because he is a man of unrest and war.

Of the Song of Songs we read as follows:

“Key to interpretation: Given in 8:6. Divine origin of love. It is a flame of God. Love is treated as a sacred thing as is also evident from the chaste language.

“Kinds of interpretations: a. Literal. The correct one. Showing that love is of divine origin. b. Allegorical. Signifying Christ and the Church. This is the view of the Church of old. Originated in the synagogue. c. Typical view. Compromise interpretation, but unsatisfactory. If the typical view is correct, then this is the greatest piece of Messianic literature? Yet we do not think of placing it on a par with prophecy.”

Hence, the Song of Songs is only a love song. There is no Messianic significance in it. It may not be allegorically interpreted.

As to the significance of Ecclesiastes the following is offered:

“Thoughts and contents.

“Fundamental thought. The author is a contemplative thinker, teaching, pondering and seeking out. The fundamental thought that he has reached by all his thinking is that all is vanity. In spite of all thought of a brighter nature he continually comes back to this thought. He has periods of unbelief and doubt.

“The first thing that he has observed is that all is in perpetual flux. *Panta rei*. Philosophic thought. Furthermore, he has noticed that the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. The conclusion is: ‘Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.’

“Moreover, he has discovered the finitude of the human mind. Here again similar to Job. Conclusion again: All is vanity.

“Query: How does it come about that he always comes to the same conclusion? It is due to a peculiar kind of doubt. He has periods in which he does not believe in the immortality of the human soul. He confesses to this doubt in 3:19. Happily, however, the man has other periods in which he is reconciled from his skepticism (cf. 3:13). Faith is finally strongest and he concludes with: ‘Fear God and keep his commandments.’”

We ask: If this is actually the right presentation of the fundamental thought of Ecclesiastes, what is its place in the organism of the Word of God?

The question is: how does the professor come to all these views? Is there a fundamental principle at the bottom of it all? To my conviction there is. The professor himself explains the attitude he assumes over against Scripture in his introduction to *Isagogics*.

But this we will quote next time.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

The Publication Committee has decided to discontinue the debate of Prof. Ralph Janssen and Rev. Herman Hoeksema after April 21.

The Publication Committee