



REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 13

JULY 5, 2025

*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*

CONTENTS

3	MEDITATION Faith in God's Angel
---	------------------------------------

5	FROM THE EDITOR
---	-----------------

5	EDITORIAL God of God: Nicea's Septendecicentennial (5)
---	---

8	LETTER Rev. Stuart Pastine
---	-------------------------------

9	TRACTS FOR SINGAPORE -I Am the Bread of Life -我就是生命的粮
---	---

11	THE SCRIVENER The Psalms of Jesus: Question and Answer Session
----	---

18	HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S <i>BANNER</i> ARTICLES Article 117: The New King and His Kingdom: Abraham, the Friend of God (continued)
----	--



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

See reformedpavilion.com for all contact and subscription information.

Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.

—Exodus 23:20–23

Faith in God's Angel

I send an Angel before thee.” What a lovely promise! How comforting for God’s weak and weary people at Mount Sinai! Behind them lay Egypt, the house of their bondage; before them lay Canaan, the land of promise. Just as the Angel of God had brought God’s helpless people out of Egypt through the Red Sea (Ex. 14:19), so the Angel of God would bring God’s helpless people into Canaan. Never mind that Israel’s enemies were ancient and many: Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites, Jebusites. Never mind that the military strength of so many warrior nations far outstripped that of little Israel, who knew how to make bricks in Egypt but not how to make war in Canaan. God would be with Israel through his Angel! “Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.” Lovely, comforting promise indeed.

“Obey his voice.” What a lovely call! How comforting for God’s disobedient and sinful people at Mount Sinai! Israel had been revealed as a nation of complainers and transgressors. Trapped at the Red Sea, they had berated Moses. Thirsty at Marah, they had murmured. Hungry in the wilderness, they had wished that they had died in Egypt. Given manna, they had broken the rules concerning its gathering. Rebellious, ungrateful, iniquitous people! And now God had just finished enumerating to Moses the

judgments—the laws and ceremonies that would govern Israel’s life and worship. Undoubtedly Israel would soon break the judgments too.

But to his disobedient people, God came with the loveliest of all calls: believe in Jesus Christ! Oh, yes, it certainly is a call to believe in Jesus Christ. The words perhaps sound like a call to obey God’s law: “Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak...” Nevertheless, the definite meaning of those words is “believe in Jesus Christ.”

Consider: the Angel was Jesus Christ. The Angel was equal with God: “My name is in him.” Yet the Angel was sent by God as God’s servant: “I send an Angel before thee.” Such an Angel can only be Jesus Christ, who is equal with God according to his divine nature and the servant of God according to his human nature. Such is the wonder and reality of God’s eternal counsel that even before Christ was born in the fullness of time, Christ operated in the Old Testament as the Angel of Jehovah.

And consider: though God used the language of “obey” and “do,” he was speaking of *faith* in the Angel and his word. There is a kind of “obey” and “do” in scripture that is law-keeping. But there is a kind of “obey” and “do” in scripture that is not at all law-keeping but only believing. Thus says Jesus: “This is the work of God, that

ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:29). And thus says Jesus’ apostle: “obedience to the faith among all nations” (Rom. 1:5). And “obey the truth” (Gal. 5:7).

And consider: when the New Testament summarizes Israel’s “provocation” (Heb. 3:15), by which Israel violated God’s call to “provoke him [the Angel] not” (Ex. 23:21), the New Testament explains the provocation as unbelief. “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Heb. 3:19). And the New Testament declares that our entering into God’s rest is by faith. “For we which have believed do enter into rest” (4:3).

What a comfort for God’s sinful people! Israel’s entrance into Canaan—and our entering

into the heavenly Canaan—did not at all depend upon their obedience but upon God’s Angel. We have heaven and all its blessings by faith alone in Christ alone and not at all by our works. Though God may chastise us for our transgressions—which chastisement is the meaning of “he will not pardon your transgressions”—he does not cut us off because of our transgressions. Rather, by faith in Christ—by faith alone! in Christ alone!—God graciously forgives our sins and brings us into his promised land.

Lovely, comforting promise! Lovely, comforting call! Believe in Jesus Christ! For he is the Angel whom God has sent before us to bring us into the place that he has prepared.

—AL



FROM THE EDITOR

I was going to say, “Warm summer greetings to our readers,” but some puns are just too bad to print. Besides, the summer weather here at *Reformed Pavilion* headquarters has not just been warm but hot. Hopefully you have something cool to drink within reach as you roll your eyes, mop your brow, and cast a glance over the contents of this issue.

Notable in this issue is a tract that the saints in Singapore plan to distribute in the near future. The tract was produced in English by Remnant Reformed Church and translated into Chinese by the fellowship in Singapore. Both the English and Chinese versions are printed in this issue. Each month reformedpavilion.com gets visitors from China, Singapore, and other places where Chinese is spoken; so we pray that the Chinese material printed here might be of special use to them. We are still working on the final design of the tracts, but the content will be as you see here. If any of our readers from anywhere in the world would like copies of the final versions of the tracts, please write to the magazine, and we will provide you with copies free of charge. If anyone would like the PDF files to use for your own

printing or digital distribution, we will gladly provide them to you free of charge. May the Lord be pleased to use this means for the spread of the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Speaking of the fellowship in Singapore, a new tab for the fellowship has been added to the website of Remnant Reformed Church. This is where updates and materials specifically relating to the fellowship will be posted. Any readers interested in visiting the page can find it at <https://www.remnantreformedchurch.org/pages/singapore-fellowship>.

Also notable in this issue is the first of two letters from one of our readers, Rev. Stuart Pastine. Although Reverend Pastine has known our writers and several of our readers for a few years, he just recently discovered *Reformed Pavilion*. We wish him many happy hours perusing the back issues, and we are delighted that people here and there continue to find the magazine.

The rest of the articles are self-explanatory, so it is time to find your favorite spot in the shade and dig in.

—AL

EDITORIAL

God of God: Nicea’s Septendecicentennial (5)

The Council of Nicea Convenes

Emperor Constantine ruled over the sprawling Roman Empire. He disapproved of the division between Alexander and Arius because he saw unity in the Christian church as a political tool to promote unity in the empire. Perhaps Constantine also had a spiritual interest in the unity of Christ’s church, for Constantine had been converted to Christianity more than a decade earlier, on the eve of the pivotal Battle of the

Milvian Bridge (AD 312). Believing that he had seen a vision in the heavens of Christ’s cross with the words *In hoc signo vinces*—“In this sign you will conquer”—Constantine went on to win the battle, which victory decisively established his rule over the Roman Empire and convinced him that the Christian God had given him the victory.

Constantine’s conversion to Christianity—whether genuine or not, God knows—marked a

radical change in the church's earthly circumstances. Prior to Constantine, Roman emperors had treated Christianity as a sect to be eradicated. Christians were blamed for the empire's problems—whether they be earthquakes or fires or invading barbarians—on the theory that the Christian worship of Jesus angered the Roman deities. Roman emperors confiscated Christian buildings and possessions, outlawed the assembling of Christians for worship, forced the Christians' acquaintances to spy against them, spread scandalous and slanderous rumors about Christian life and worship, and rounded up Christians for torture and death. The Roman Empire had been a manifestation of the anti-Christian kingdom, which unleashes its furious hatred against Christ by persecuting Christ's church.

After Constantine's conversion the church suddenly found that Christianity was the favored religion of the empire. Not only did Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313 grant religious tolerance to Christians, but also many Roman citizens sought to curry favor with the emperor by renouncing their old pagan traditions and converting to the emperor's newfound religion. Overt persecution ceased, but what replaced it could be considered even more dangerous for the Christian church. For now the church had become almost inextricably linked with the state. That, too, was a manifestation of the antichristian kingdom, which uses the church's spiritual authority to establish man's kingdom.

Behind all the events unfolding in the Roman Empire was the sovereign and secret providence of God, who works all things after the counsel of his own will. God brought all things to pass according to his own purpose, so that in AD 325 the church would come together to declare the truth of the gospel that Jesus is God. Whatever Constantine envisioned his role to be, God turned the ruler's heart whithersoever he would, as the streams of water.

Even before the division between Alexander and Arius, Emperor Constantine had been contemplating the possibility of convening a universal council of the Christian church. Matters had been arising that needed answers. For example, some officebearers in the church had been voluntarily castrating themselves, following the strange example of the church father Origen, who mistakenly believed that Jesus' instruction about becoming a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom of heaven meant literal, physical self-mutilation. Men began to think that the solution to their insatiable lust was to cut away their offending members. Instead of finding consolation in the wounds of Christ for their sins, these men sought consolation in the horrific wounds that they inflicted on themselves. Lust is a sin, but so is self-mutilation. One of the first things that Constantine's council would have to decide was that men who had thus castrated themselves should be suspended from the ministry of the gospel.

As Constantine was contemplating the possibility of a universal church council, the Arian controversy exploded. Arius' heresy that Jesus is not God had spread rapidly through the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. Alexander's encyclical letter condemning Arius had rightly made compromise impossible. At first Emperor Constantine did not realize the importance of the issue. He "was at first inclined to consider the contest a futile logomachy"¹—a mere semantic argument over terms but without any doctrinal substance. However, when it became evident that the doctrinal division in the Christian church was real and that the division in the church threatened an accompanying political division in the empire, Emperor Constantine convened what would become the great Council of Nicea in 325.

Constantine made ample provision for the council. By letter he summoned bishops to meet in the village of Nicea, within easy travel of the

¹ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity* (1910; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 621.

emperor's seat in Constantinople. It would be an ecumenical—or universal—council. Representatives from the Christian church in all parts of the empire would be in attendance. Each bishop was to take with him two other officebearers and three servants. The empire funded their transportation and their lodging. By all accounts the preparations were a sight to behold. At least 318 bishops—plus presbyters, deacons, and servants—arrived in Nicea afoot and on horses, donkeys, and mules.

Many of the delegates to the Council of Nicea had suffered terrible persecution at the hands of a previous Roman emperor, Diocletian, who had been determined to eradicate Christianity from the Roman Empire. There was Paul of Neo-Caesarea, both his hands permanently limp and dead due to the maiming he had suffered from the cruel torturer's red-hot iron. Several men, like Paphnutius of Egypt, were one-eyed, having suffered their right eyes to be dug out rather than deny their Lord. Others had suffered their right arms to be dismembered rather than pour out a drink offering to the Roman idols. Many of the bishops and deacons had suffered the persecution of their Lord, and they came to Nicea as a collection of broken, disfigured, crippled, blinded men. Theodoret, one of the earliest historians to chronicle the Council of Nicea, wrote, "In short, the council looked like an assembled army of martyrs."² And what an army is an army of martyrs! Without eyes but seeing the kingdom of heaven; without hands but holding the unspeakable riches of Christ; without arms but embracing the glorious gospel of salvation. The idols have eyes, but they see not; the martyrs have not eyes, but they see!

It was the first time that such an assembly of the church had convened, and it moved men deeply.

Many of those present knew of each other via hearsay or through correspondence. But now, for the first time in the history of Christianity, they had before their eyes physical evidence of the universality of the church.³

Some of the delegates mistakenly thought that the Council of Nicea would be an opportunity to air their own private disputes. These delegates came laden with papers and communications to establish their cases. One historian, with a wry sense of humor, describes Constantine's response.

Many bishops took the opportunity to bring to the emperor's attention their own personal grievances and problems, but the emperor was not interested. He burned all their papers in one huge bonfire and exhorted them instead to unity. The attention of the bishops was thus concentrated on the matter at hand.⁴

And what a matter was at hand. For the council must face the great question of the ages regarding Jesus: Who is this man? Who is this man who is born king of the Jews? Who is this man whom even the winds and the sea obey? Who is this man whose kingdom is not of this world? Is Jesus God, as Alexander says? Or is Jesus merely a god, as Arius says?

Who is Jesus? In the answer to that question lies the Christian faith.

To be continued...

—AL

² Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. B. Jackson, in NPNF 2/3:33–159, as published at <https://www.fourthcentury.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Theodoret-on-Nicaea.pdf>, 1.7.6.

³ Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), 186.

⁴ Herman Hanko, *Contending for the Faith: The Rise of Heresy and the Development of the Truth* (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2010), 38–39.

Ah, there is a letter in the mailbag! Two, in fact! These letters arrived while the undersigned was in Singapore, so there has been some delay in finding them. A hearty welcome to our correspondent and a humble request that the delay not be interpreted as disinterest. For a little magazine toiling away in a corner, even one letter would make our week. Two letters—even if they are from a single author—bring us double satisfaction. So a hearty welcome to our correspondent and a hearty invitation to all and sundry to add your letters to the mailbag, if you are so minded. The editors have dusted off our keyboards and have dug our thinking caps out of the sock drawer and are standing by to field your correspondence.

Our correspondent this week is Rev. Stuart Pastine, who has served pastorates in the Christian Reformed Church and the United Reformed Churches and is currently retired in Missouri. Readers of *Reformed Pavilion* may recognize Reverend Pastine from his contributions to *Sword and Shield* in years past. This week we will consider his first letter. In a coming week, Lord willing, we will consider his second letter.

Brothers, re:the gentiles in Ephesians 2:12 (Love For The Stranger) who were without Christ, having no hope and without God in the world – were they at that time “the seed of the serpent” and did they become the “seed of the woman” when they were regenerated, even though they were elect from the foundation of the world? Please explain.

Our correspondent refers to the meditation in the June 7, 2025, issue of *Reformed Pavilion*.¹ Entitled “Love For the Stranger,” the meditation explained Exodus 23:9—“Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” The meditation made reference to the

Gentiles before and after their conversion, as described by the apostle in Ephesians 2:12–13—“That 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: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

Our correspondent’s question is about which “seed” the elect Gentiles were. Were the elect Gentiles always the seed of the woman, even prior to their regeneration? Or were the elect Gentiles the seed of the serpent in their unbelief, only becoming the seed of the woman at their regeneration?

The term “seed” in scripture refers to Jesus Christ. Whether scripture speaks of the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15), the seed of Abraham (Gen. 17:7), or the seed of David (II Sam. 7:12), the seed in scripture is Christ. This is the inspired apostle’s interpretation of the Old Testament seed. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. 3:16). Because God chose his people in Christ, we also are the seed for Jesus’ sake. “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (v. 29).

Therefore, the elect Gentiles were always the seed of the woman, from all eternity. Even when they were born dead in trespasses and sins, they were the seed in Christ. Even when they grew up in unbelief and pagan superstition, they were the seed in Christ. Even before they were engrafted into Christ by faith—that is, when they were “without Christ” (Eph. 2:12) as far as their spiritual condition was concerned—they were nevertheless the eternally beloved and chosen seed in Christ. Because God’s decree of election is eternal and immutable, the seed of

¹ Andrew Lanning, “Love for the Stranger,” *Reformed Pavilion* 3, no. 9 (June 7, 2025): 3–4.

the woman is always the seed of the woman. And because God's decree of election is effectual, the seed of the woman are inevitably—in God's time and according to his decree—engrafted into Christ spiritually during the course of their lives on earth, so that their spiritual condition becomes that of life in him.

There is something wonderful and mysterious and incomprehensible about this to us. With respect to his spiritual condition, the elect Gentile before his regeneration was without Christ; but with respect to his eternal state, the elect Gentile before his regeneration was in Christ, having been chosen in him before the foundation of the world. There is no discrepancy here, for God's "good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself" (Eph. 1:9) was to save those for whom salvation was humanly impossible. We—for whom there could be no inheritance of life—"have obtained an inheritance, being

predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (v. 11).

The above is the answer to the actual question that our correspondent raised. It does appear to the undersigned that our correspondent perhaps has a question within his question. In other words, it seems that our correspondent is not merely seeking doctrinal clarification but that he intends to make a point with his question. Does our correspondent have his eye on something or someone that he disagrees with, and his question is his way of getting at that disagreement? If not, then my apologies for thinking so, and I submit the above answer for our correspondent's consideration. But if there is a further point to be made, then I invite our correspondent to write again to spell out his point for the likes of me, whose thinking cap might be on a little crooked.

—AL

TRACTS FOR SINGAPORE

I Am the Bread of Life

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). Jesus said this to people who were hungry and who were looking for food. Jesus had given them so much free food the previous day that they could not eat it all. When they came to Jesus again, looking for more free food, Jesus taught them a lesson about the kind of food that only he can provide. You see, all the food in the world cannot truly satisfy people. They eat, but they get hungry; they eat some more, but they will soon hunger again. All earthly things are like that food. People get money, but they want more. People have homes, but they want nicer ones. People have holidays, but they want to extend them. No amount of money, homes, holidays, food, entertainment, or any other material thing can satisfy people forever. Jesus called all these things the food that perishes.

But Jesus provides a food that can satisfy us forever. That is what he meant when he said,

"I am the bread of life." Listen to his explanation: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Jesus is talking about satisfaction in our souls. He is talking about the satisfaction of knowing that no matter what happens to us here on earth, we have eternal life that can never be taken away. God gave Jesus as a gift to his people to comfort us and assure us that we will live with him forever. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40).

Jesus gives us the satisfaction and comfort of eternal life by taking away the guilt of our sin. Whenever we sin—by being proud, by blaspheming God's name, by failing to help our neighbour when we could, by lustful thoughts and fornicating actions, by coveting, by failing to worship

God, or by committing any other sin—we are guilty of transgressing against the holy God. God is so majestic and holy that every sin, no matter how small it seems, is terribly wicked. Every person, no matter how good he seems, deserves to die forever because of his wicked sins against such a holy God. But God's love for his people is so great that he sent Jesus to die in our place. By Jesus' death on the cross, he paid the full penalty of all the sins of all his people. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).

What a marvelous gift of God for his people! Jesus, the bread of life! "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." And what does it mean to eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood? It means to come to Jesus in faith and to trust that what he says is true. "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

Many of you who read this will not believe Jesus. You will doubt that what Jesus says is true. You will not come to Jesus for true and everlasting satisfaction, but you will continue seeking fulfillment in money, in travel, in politics, in pleasures, in idols that cannot see or hear or walk, in traditions, in empty entertainment. All these things seem so nice now! But none of these things will ever truly satisfy you. All these things will perish, and finally you will perish too.

But in Jesus Christ is life and salvation. In Jesus Christ alone is life and salvation. For Jesus is the bread of life! Believe on him! Trust that Jesus is the saviour from sin! And remember what Jesus said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life" (John 6:47-48).

If you would like to hear more about Jesus, the bread of life, we invite you to contact us. We also invite you to join us to study the Bible on Saturday evenings and for worship and fellowship on Sunday mornings.

Singapore Remnant Reformed Fellowship

Contact Information:

Email: sgchristian137@gmail.com

WhatsApp: 89604637

我就是生命的粮

耶稣说：“我就是生命的粮。”(约翰福音 6:35) 耶稣对那些饥饿又寻求食物的人说了这句话。耶稣前一天给了他们太多免费的食物，他们根本吃不完。当他们再次来到耶稣面前，寻求更多免费食物时，耶稣给他们上了一道课，告诉他们唯有祂才能提供什么样的食物。要知道，世上所有的食物都无法真正满足人们。他们吃了，会饿；再吃一些，但很快又会饿。世上所有的东西都像食物一样。人们有了钱，但他们想要更多。人们有了家，但他们想要更好的房子。人们有了假期，但他们想要延长假期。无论多少金钱、房子、假期、食物、娱乐，或任何其他物质的东西，都无法永远满足人们。耶稣把所有这些都称为必坏的食物。

但耶稣提供了一种可以永远满足我们的食物。这就是祂说“我就是生命的粮”的意思。听听他的解释：

“我就是生命的粮；到我这里来的，必定不饿；信我的，永远不渴。”耶稣谈论的是我们灵魂的满足。祂谈论的是知道无论我们在世上遭遇什么，我们都拥有永生，这永生是永不被夺去的。上帝赐予耶稣作为礼物，安慰我们，并向我们保证，我们将永远与祂同在。“差我来者的意思是叫一切见子而信的人得永生；并且在末日我要叫他复活。”(约翰福音 6:40)

耶稣除去了我们罪的罪债，赐给我们永生的满足和安慰。每当我们犯罪(-)骄傲自大、亵渎神的名、未能尽力提供帮助给邻舍、贪恋、淫乱、贪婪、不敬拜神，或犯下任何其他罪(-)我们就犯罪违背圣洁的神了。神是如此威严圣洁，以至于每一种罪，无论看起来多么微小，都极其邪恶。每个人，无论看起来多么善良，都因着对如此圣洁的神所犯下的极大罪恶，而应得永远的死亡。但神对祂子民的爱是如此深厚，以至于祂差遣耶稣来代替我们死。耶稣在十字架上的死，为祂所有子民的罪付

上了全部的赎价。耶稣在经文中说道“我是从天上降下来活的粮；人若吃这粮，就必永远活着。我所要赐的粮就是我的肉，是我为世人之生命而献上的。”（约翰福音 6:51）

上帝赐予祂子民何等奇妙的礼物！耶稣，生命的粮！耶稣在经文中说道“吃我肉、喝我血的人常在我里面，我也常在他里面。正如永活的父差我来，我又因父活着；所以，吃我的人也要因我活着”吃耶稣的肉、喝祂的血意味着什么呢？这意味着凭着信心来到耶稣面前，相信祂所说的都是真的。“我就是生命的粮。到我这里来的，必定不饿；信我的，永远不渴”（约翰福音 6:35）

你们当中许多读到这篇文章的人不会相信耶稣。你们会怀疑耶稣所说的是否属实。你们不会来到耶稣面前寻求真正永远的满足，而是会继续在金钱、旅行、政治、享乐、看不见、听不见、行走不了的偶像、传统、虚空的娱乐中寻求满足。所有这些现在看起来都那么美

好！但这些都永远无法真正满足你。所有这些东西都会灭亡，最终你也会灭亡。

但在耶稣基督里有生命和救赎。唯有在耶稣基督里有生命和救赎。因为耶稣是生命的粮！相信祂！相信耶稣是从罪中拯救我们的救主！记住耶稣说过的话：“我实实在在地告诉你们，信我的人有永生。我就是生命的粮。”（约翰福音 6:47-48）

如果您想了解更多关于耶稣，生命的粮——的信息，欢迎您与我们联系。我们也邀请您在周六晚上与我们一同学习圣经，并在周日早上参加敬拜和团契。

新加坡余民归正团契

Singapore Remnant Reformed Fellowship

联系方式：

电子邮件: sgchristian137@gmail.com

WhatsApp 号码: 89604637

THE SCRIVENER

The Psalms of Jesus: Question and Answer Session

This is a copyedited transcript of the question and answer session following the speech “The Psalms of Jesus,” which was printed in last week’s *Reformed Pavilion*.¹

We know that the psalms are really important, but why aren’t more churches using them in their songs of worship?

There are a number of reasons for that. Probably the first reason is that it is in our nature as human beings not to appreciate what God gives us. It is in our nature as human beings to think that we can do better, and so throughout the years men always think, “We can do a better job. We can make a better book, a more beautiful book, a more singable book than the psalms of Zion.” So that is probably the first reason: it is the weakness of our flesh.

The second reason is that the devil always, always opposes the psalms. When you see what the psalms are—Jesus’ words, so that we can learn to see everything through Jesus’ eyes and hear through Jesus’ ears—they are dangerous for the devil. He cannot have them. And so he has always been an opponent of the psalms. For example, when Israel was taken captive by Babylon in the Old Testament, the Babylonians mocked the Israelites for their psalm singing. They said to those who were weeping in that strange land, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” (Ps. 137:3). But the Israelites could not do that. The temple was destroyed; all of their Old Testament worship had been totally overthrown; and now their enemies were mocking them by calling them to sing one of the songs of Zion. The devil continued to oppose psalms

¹ Andrew Lanning, “The Psalms of Jesus,” speech given on June 14, 2025, in Singapore. The speech can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HAKHgv4gBg>. See also *Reformed Pavilion* 3, no. 12 (June 28, 2025): 9–19.

through some of the hymn writers. Isaac Watts is well known as a popular hymn writer of years past. His stated intention was to make David sound like a Christian. Now, that sounds kind-of pious; but what he meant was, “Those Old Testament songs that God gave us and that are the songs of Christ are not sufficient until I, Isaac Watts, put my hand to them and update them for the New Testament.” That was really the height of pride and the height of arrogance, even blasphemy; but that was the thinking of many. So there has always been an attack on the psalms.

Another reason might be that in our modern age we recognize that the psalms are ancient songs. They sound old-fashioned. The psalms also are full of fighting, tears, sorrows, sin, affliction, and persecution; and we want something upbeat, something that makes us happy. And so we don’t look to the psalms but to something else.

And then maybe this could be added: that the church, for whatever reason, has lost the key to the psalms. We don’t see them as the songs of Christ. It is my conviction that when the church has that key—when we recognize that the psalms are the songs of Christ—the psalms will grow on us to the point that we say, “This is all we want! This is sufficient. This is deep. I am learning so much about Christ in understanding the psalms. The psalms are opened up to me. *Christ* is opened up to me.” So the church has lost the key to the psalms and needs to regain that through instruction.

I wonder if it is constructive to think from the point of view that non-psalm songs are just in general bad, because there are many music artists in the past that have made a large impact on society through songs. “Amazing Grace” is a pretty good song, right? I mean, everyone would agree with that. So I wonder if it is a constructive perspective to view it from that angle that psalms should be the standard and that everything else stems from pride or stems from some sort of sin. There is an attack on psalms, like you mentioned.

Is it constructive to look at the psalms as being better or the hymns as being bad? My position is

not that all hymns written by men are wicked or false or something along those lines. There are good hymns that are sound, hymns that have been helpful to God’s people, hymns that have been instructive. I wonder, though, if the hymn *movement* is everything that we assume it is. We assume that the movement toward hymns has been good for the church. And I am not convinced that that has been the case. The hymn *movement* was part of a departure from the kind of worship that God requires, so that once you break one part of that worship by bringing in what man wills, before long you’re going to break all of the worship by bringing in what man wills. The standard always becomes, what do I want? What pleases *me*? What is *my* will? And the problem for us humans is that we have no idea what pleases God. We don’t have the first clue. We think we do because we know what pleases us. And our assumption is that because it makes *me* feel something, it must make God feel something. Because it pleases me, it *must* please God. We don’t have the first clue. *God* tells us what he wants for his worship. So the hymn-writing movement, especially as a movement to bring hymns into church and to displace psalms in church, I don’t believe has been good for the church. I believe it has been destructive for the church. It has been great for man’s feelings, but it has not been good for depth of understanding; it has not been good for broadness of knowledge of the truth.

To add to that, there *are* hymns that are not sound. In fact, it has been a tactic of false teachers going way back to the early New Testament age to introduce false doctrine into the church through their own hymns that they have written, which they have also used to displace the psalms. One example, which is very timely in this month, the month of June, is the example of Arius. Arius was a heretic back in the year AD 325. This is June 2025, which means that it has been seventeen hundred years since the Nicene Creed and the Council of Nicea in June 325, which answered the heretic Arius. Arius did not believe that Jesus was God; and he wrote a hymn, put it to a popular street tune, and had it sung all

throughout Alexandria, Egypt. His hymn was this: “There was when he was not”—there was a time when Jesus was not, which means there was a time when Jesus was created, so he is something less than the Father. It was a denial of Jesus as God. Arius popularized that doctrine through a hymn. And that has gone on throughout the ages, that there are very unsound hymns that get into your head. They are meant to. You take them home with you; you teach them to your children; the hymns become generational; they spread through the church; and the error in those hymns spreads and becomes entrenched. Hymn writing is not the only way that false doctrine is entrenched, but that has been a tactic in the past.

So if we want to talk about what is or is not constructive, our position about psalms does not mean to throw out every hymn as wrong. It *does* mean to say, “Do not bring hymns into the public worship of the church. Psalms are for public worship.” And it is to warn that the hymn-writing movement has not been good for the church.

Hi, everyone. I’m Tian. And I know some of you from a long time ago. We go a long way back. But I actually don’t have a question. Many good things are said about psalm singing, and I agree with them; and psalm singing ought to dominate our lives as Christians, whether it be private or in worship. But I am here to warn you today that Reverend Lanning—as well as those from Remnant Reformed Church—their position is not simply singing the psalms, but their position is exclusive psalmody, so that according to the second commandment, if you do not sing the psalms in worship, you sin. That is the position. And that position is not biblical, and it is not creedal. That has been proven in the history of the Reformed Protestant Churches, when Reverend Lanning was suspended because of that position. And if you need any proof from the Bible, I’ll refer you to Revelation 5, where the saints in heaven sang a song that was not in the exact wording of a psalm. That proves the position that exclusive psalmody is not correct. And what I find also to be disturbing is that there was a good

opportunity to explain the position of exclusive psalmody in the previous question, and yet Reverend Lanning did not want to go there. And I wonder why. But that position is the position of Remnant. That’s all I have to say.

You make a warning about exclusive psalmody. I embrace exclusive psalmody and make no secret of that. Exclusive psalmody is our position. You well know, and for those who don’t, that position was battled for in 2023 in the Reformed Protestant Churches; and there are many writings that can be found explaining that position. There is a magazine called *Reformed Pavilion* that we started, and many of the objections that Tian Loong just raised have been answered there.

You intend as a warning a statement that we believe exclusive psalmody. That is not something to take as a warning. We embrace exclusive psalmody wholeheartedly. The danger with regard to what we sing in worship is that we elevate the will of man and worship God according to our will. And the scriptures warn about that everywhere. In the Old Testament God warned against graven images. At Mount Sinai, for example, Aaron made a golden calf to represent Jehovah, and the people sacrificed to Jehovah before that golden calf. That was will worship. That was the will of man that wanted to see his God, touch his God, and have some physical contact with his God put in place of what God required, which was worship not by a graven image but in spirit and in truth. You can follow further warnings against that will worship throughout the Old Testament. The way King Saul worshiped, for example; the way David brought the ark of the covenant to God’s house on a new cart instead of the Levites’ carrying it on the poles as God required. And then you find that warning carrying on into the New Testament, where Jesus warned against the scribes and Pharisees’ making their traditions of men to be the commandments and doctrines of God. And then the apostle Paul warns against will worship in Colossians 2:23. Will worship always has a certain appeal. There is a certain sense of piety and even rightness with it. In the case of

hymn singing, that sense of propriety would be something like this: “These are good hymns. There are good hymns; there are bad hymns. We just want to sing the good hymns.” Or the sense of propriety might be this: “What about Revelation 5? There are other songs in the Bible than the psalms.” The problem is, what does scripture say—what does God require—about our worship? What God requires is quite clear in scripture. Then we don’t elevate our wills but worship according to God’s will.

So where does the Bible say, “Sing psalms”? That command is given very explicitly in Psalm 95: “Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms” (Ps. 95:2). Jesus’ practice was psalm singing. We never read of his singing a hymn, a man-made song. He sang psalms at the institution of the Lord’s supper. We find the apostle Paul requiring the church to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, which are the psalms. Those words were the headings over the 150 psalms. So throughout the scriptures, God has consistently required the church to sing psalms. That is the book for public worship. And never did Jesus or the apostles tell the church, “You really need to write a new songbook.”

I am intrigued by what was said at the beginning of your statement: we should make psalms the priority. On what basis would the psalms be the priority? If they are not what God has given, what God has required, then we may not make it a law that we should make the psalms a priority. Then we should say to anybody who wants to make a new hymnbook and replace the psalms, “You should go ahead and do that.” The fact that even opponents of exclusive psalmody appeal to the priority of the psalms indicates to me that the anti-exclusive psalmody position is missing something. It is overlooking something. There is some dissonance there.

And then, Revelation 5 has been thrown at us quite a bit over the years. In Revelation 5 we have the inhabitants of heaven singing a song of praise to the Lamb. What about that? The fact that in Revelation God reveals the church in

heaven singing a song of praise at Jesus’ ascension is not necessarily prescriptive. It is descriptive of what was happening. But is it prescriptive? That is the question. Is God telling us by that, “This is what you must do”? And the argument that Revelation 5 stands against exclusive psalmody actually proves too much because the argument would be, “This is a song God gave his church to sing,” and yet the churches that you have been a member of have never sung it and, as far as I know, never will. They don’t have Revelation 5 in their songbook. So if we point to these other songs in scripture and say, “That is a prescription for us to sing those,” it actually is proving too much because those who are making that argument don’t sing them. And then also, Revelation 5 is in the psalms. It is not quoted word for word, but you can sing about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, his ascension, the glory that belongs to him, the glory of the Lamb and the sacrifice; all of that is in the psalms. None of it is absent from the psalms.

So make the warning, but I embrace exclusive psalmody. That is the position of scripture. And now especially, why? Why is that the position of scripture? Because of what the psalms are as Jesus’ songs. That was how exclusive psalmody came to the Reformed Protestant Churches too. It didn’t come because someone suddenly went crazy over the second commandment. It came out of the gospel. It came out of what the psalms are. And the knowledge that the psalms are the songs of Jesus opens the psalms to us. And that knowledge also opens Jesus to us. Having that key, we know out of the psalms things about Jesus that are blessed and wonderful and very comforting.

In Singapore we have some churches that sing psalms but totally without musical instrument. What is your view on that?

The question is about musical instruments. There are some churches in Singapore that sing psalms but do not use accompaniment, and they do not use accompaniment under the conviction that it would be wrong to do so, just like it would

be my conviction that it would be wrong to introduce a man-made hymn into worship. My conviction about musical accompaniment is that that is a circumstance of worship, not an element. Musical accompaniment is an indifferent matter.

Those who would hold to no musical accompaniment would take issue with me, but the regulative principle of worship operates this way: What has God required us to do in worship, in the actual elements that are worship? We only do what God has required. The regulative principle is not permission to do anything that God hasn't forbidden. The regulative principle is that we do only what God has required in worship. What are the elements of worship that God gives us? Preaching the gospel, singing the psalms, administering the sacraments, praying, and giving offerings. Those five things belong to worship. There are other things that we need to decide in order to do those things—for example, “What time are we going to meet for worship? Are we going to meet at 9:30 or 10:00 a.m.? Are we going to meet at 2:00 or 5:00 p.m.?” The time of worship is not required in the word. It is not an element of worship. It is a circumstance. What should the minister wear? Should the minister wear a suit coat, even if it is hot in Singapore? Should he wear a tie? Should he wear a scholar's robe the way some did during the Reformation? What should the members wear? How should we arrange the way the people sit? All of those things are decisions we have to make, but they are not part of the actual worship. They are just circumstances that have to do with us living in this world, having to have a set time and way of doing things. My conviction is that instrumental accompaniment is one of those things that is just the way we do things, just a circumstance. The key to understanding which things belong to the regulative principle and which don't is by the distinction between elements—the actual aspects of worship—and circumstances—time and place and arrangements.

The argument against musical accompaniment often proves too much as well. Those who

do not use a piano have often used a pitch pipe. So there is an instrument involved—to blow one note to help the singing begin, but it is an instrument. Even for one note, it is an instrument. So I think that even those who would forbid musical accompaniment would have to answer how a pitch pipe does not violate their principle.

To try to help illustrate, consider the matter of tunes. Which tune are you going to use? You are going to sing to a tune, but that is a circumstance. The tune is not the worship itself but is merely a circumstance of singing. The instruments would be like those tunes. The accompaniment is not the worship itself but is merely a circumstance of singing. Have a piano, or don't have a piano. Use this tune, or use that tune. But sing psalms.

I would like to thank Tian for his warning, because in the answer to it was a good explanation that we do appreciate and use exclusive psalmody because of the second commandment. We find exclusive psalmody in the second commandment, and we actually do find that to be a very beautiful thing. So thank you.

There are some churches in Singapore—conservative churches—that include hymns and psalms in their worship. I think you know some of the churches that we visit. They do hymns and psalms. The hymnbook and then some psalmody. What about this?

There are churches in Singapore that are conservative, but their songbook includes psalms and hymns. I would even guess that there might be some that have very few psalms and mostly hymns. And the question is, what about this? A church might be conservative, but its use of hymns is a problem. The question illustrates that we are going to go wrong when we try to decide what we should do in worship by starting with, what do I like to do? what am I used to doing? what has been done for my lifetime and before me? what are we used to doing? what are other people doing? There are a lot of things we might agree that we like to do. We are God's people. We have the Spirit of Christ. We are

“conservative.” But what we do in worship does not arise out of who we are as God’s people but out of what God has required as our God. There are a lot of things we might like to do. But the question isn’t, what do I like? or what am I used to or comfortable with? The question is, what does God require? My conviction is that he has not required the use of man-made hymns, but he has given us the psalms for worship.

In our history we had to face this with regard to one hymn that had a long-standing place among us, “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow.” Many English-speaking churches around the world for many, many years have loved that hymn and sing that hymn in their worship. That was the hymn we opened every single service with, morning and evening. And we had to face the question, is this what God requires? We love that hymn. It is sound. “Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost”; that is a sound expression of the truth. There is no false doctrine in it. But is it what God requires, that we have that man-made hymn alongside the psalms that we sing in worship? We had to come to the conviction that it is not what God requires. Then what do we do? Put that hymn out.

The matter of reform in worship is going to go against things that we like. One of the questions that was asked when we were getting rid of that hymn was this: “You mean to tell me that I have been sinning my whole life when I sing this?” Or “You mean to tell me that my fathers were sinning before me by singing this, that they were doing something contrary to the law of God?” Yes, that may be. There are all kinds of things that we do that are sin that we don’t know and have to learn. That is why God sends reformation to his church. He sends reformation of doctrine, but he sends reformation of worship right with it. In Hezekiah’s day, for example, in Judah, they had stopped celebrating the passover. They were supposed to celebrate it every year. When Hezekiah reinstituted the passover, there was something they were *still* doing wrong, and so they had to pray for forgiveness for that. It takes some time for reformation to

work. But again, the question to face is not, what am I used to? what do I like? but, what does God require? And then why? Why does God require that? Then you start digging into it, and you see, “Oh! Here is why he requires the psalms: these are Jesus’ songs. And these other hymns are not Jesus’ songs.”

Exclusive psalmody applies to public worship. We sing psalms for worship—exclusively psalms for worship, specifically in accordance to God’s word. In other settings—fellowship; not in terms of the worship—probably other hymns can come in. Then another thing is that the psalms have already been completed. 150 of them. So if we’re going to introduce more, in principle can we say that it’s like people trying to add new books to the Bible if we continue to allow more hymns to be composed, to be written, to be completed, in that sense?

Two points. First of all, the brother correctly explains that the regulative principle and the singing of exclusive psalmody is for the setting of public, official worship by the church. It is in that setting that we ask, “What does God require?” In other settings, like in families, in social gatherings, the regulative principle does not apply. There can be an echo of the regulative principle outside of worship. In other words, even though the regulative principle does not apply to the Christian school, there will very likely be a strong movement in the Christian school to learn the psalms. We are going to want the psalms to have priority of place, if not *all* the place. So there can be an echo. But the brother is correct: exclusive psalmody applies to the official, formal gathering of God’s church for worship.

A second point that he brought up, which is well taken, is that if God has given a complete volume of songs for official worship, would adding our own compositions to that volume be like adding our own books to the Bible? I think that is a good analogy. I would want to think about that a little further, whether the charge could actually be made that someone was adding to the Bible. Perhaps it is enough to say that adding hymns is against the regulative principle.

Nevertheless, I think it is a good analogy. We don't add other books to the Bible and say, "We have the Spirit, so we can understand truth; so this chapter of the dogmatics book is now going to become book sixty-seven of the Bible." And so also in an analogous way, God has given the 150 psalms, so we wouldn't say, "We're now going to add one of our hymns to God's psalms." I appreciate the analogy that was brought up.

Another thing: what about churches, not just in Singapore, that have not been practicing exclusive psalmody during their public worship? And let's say that if we are members of such a church, how should we go about dealing with this? And some churches are following a long tradition of singing other songs than psalms. If those church traditions are not in line with what the Bible teaches, how are the members all going to go about dealing with it?

That is a matter of reformation, and reformation always takes time. It never happens overnight. Doctrinal reformation does not happen overnight, and reformation of worship does not happen overnight. We don't know everything all at once. We cannot know everything all at once. There are examples in the Old Testament of reformations that took time. I have mentioned Hezekiah's reformation. He had a doctrinal reformation, and he had a reformation of worship. That reformation of worship took so much time that the first time the people of Judah tried it, they got it wrong. There were people who had come to the passover who were not purified in the way that the law required, and

they were still allowed to come. They went on for a time in that error. That doesn't mean they were allowed to perpetuate that error and carry on forever in it, but it does mean there had to be time to understand the reformation.

So how should we go about reformation in the church? It has to be through instruction. That is the only way. We need to be taught from the word of God what worship is and what the requirements of worship are, taught from the word of God *why* these are the requirements of worship. That is what takes hold of our hearts because now we are getting to the gospel. *Why?* is always grounded in the gospel. So it takes time and instruction. If members are convinced of the truth and their leaders don't agree with them yet or haven't ever heard of exclusive psalmody before, then those members can raise it to the leaders; they can ask them to study it. Members could also protest and appeal what is being done in their church to seek reformation in that way. But the only way that reformation comes to the church is by the Spirit of Christ through the word of God. And that reformation, by the Spirit and according to the word of God, comes through teaching, teaching, teaching. That takes hold of members' hearts. It might take a while, but that takes hold. So ask for instruction; give instruction. That's how.

Thank you, everyone, for the excellent questions. May God use these answers for our profit and his glory.

—AL



Article CXVII: The New King and His Kingdom: Abraham, the Friend of God (continued)

And he believed in Jehovah and He reckoned it to him for righteousness—Gen. 15:6.

Neither is it in harmony with Scripture if we interpret Abraham's faith as a source of works of righteousness. Also this interpretation is offered. It differs very little from the preceding, only shifting the emphasis from faith itself to the works performed by faith as a ground of righteousness. The argument then is as follows. Abraham by nature is a sinner and condemned. But he possesses the faith. In that faith he can please God. By the power of that faith he performs works of righteousness. And God, foreseeing that faith will manifest itself in these works of righteousness, reckons it unto him for righteousness. As I say, also this interpretation is offered, and it differs very little from the preceding.

But all these explanations must be rejected in the light which the Word of God itself spreads upon the passage from Gen. 15. It is the Apostle Paul who in the fourth chapter of his epistle to the Romans refers to it. And Rom. IV indubitably eliminates the interpretations that have been presented of the righteousness of Abraham like those quoted above. In this chapter the apostle first of all clearly contrasts the righteousness which is by faith with that which is by works. Says he: "What shall we say then that Abraham our father as pertaining to the flesh hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now, to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of

grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Notice that Paul strongly contrasts the righteousness by faith of Abraham with the righteousness of works. The one excludes the other. Abraham was not justified because of anything he performed, neither by the works of faith, but by grace. Thus the apostle further explains in the 16th verse of the same chapter: "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace." Abraham, therefore, was reckoned to be righteous by grace. It was a gracious imputation. It was not thus that faith itself is righteousness, or that the works of faith make righteous. For then it would have been of works and not of grace. No, but although there were no works on the part of Abraham whatever, on the basis of which he was righteous before God, yet God counted the faith of Abraham as righteousness. Hence, if the reckoning of God is a just imputation, the basis for it must be sought not in the faith of Abraham as such, but in something else, in the atonement of Christ Jesus and his righteousness. This is emphasized the more strongly in Rom. IV, where Paul expresses that Abraham possessed identically the same faith which also believers of the new dispensation possess and whereby also they are saved. Thus plainly in Vss. 11, 12: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed to them also. And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the

steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.” The implication is evidently that we are justified by no other faith than that which also Abraham possessed. The faith of which Scripture speaks in Gen. 15:6 is the same faith as also the believers of the New Testament possess. It is the saving faith. It is principally the faith that has for its object Jehovah as the God of salvation in Christ Jesus. How Abraham could possess that faith thousands of years before Christ was born is a question we must look into presently. Now, it must be established first of all that in the light of Scripture Abraham possessed the same saving faith as that through which believers of the new dispensation are righteous in Christ.

In the second place, the text in Gen. 15 tells us that this faith was **reckoned** unto Abraham for **righteousness**. This implies in the first place that Abraham without the faith was unrighteous. He was guilty, born in sin and iniquity as well as any other man by nature. As such he could have no covenant-fellowship with God. In the second place, it implies that with the faith Abraham, who by nature was guilty and

condemned, unrighteous, was righteous before God. Without faith unrighteous. With faith righteous. Whatever may be our interpretation of this righteousness by faith must be sought in the fact that God reckoned it thus. Faith is in itself not righteousness. Neither is this righteousness of Abraham by faith a mere matter of subjective consciousness. The text does not say that Abraham by faith came to the consciousness of righteousness before God. No, it is a question of God’s reckoning. God looks upon believing Abraham as righteous. Again, how this is possible we must still consider. For the present it is of greatest importance that we establish that the faith of Abraham caused him to be righteous before God because of God’s imputation. We must clearly grasp this truth in order to be able to answer the question: What was that faith of Abraham? In whom did Abraham believe? What did he believe?

Abraham possessed the faith. In that faith he was accounted righteous before God. And on this righteousness of God he was the party of God in his covenant.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

