



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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And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

—Exodus 32:7–10

I Have Seen This People

Now it was Israel's turn to be revealed. Thus far at Sinai, Jehovah had revealed himself. In cloud and storm and fire and voice, Jehovah had revealed his glory. In boundaries and thick darkness and fearsome prohibitions, Jehovah had revealed his holiness. In law and commandment and statute and judgment, Jehovah had revealed his perfection. In covenant meal and covenant mediator, Jehovah had revealed his mercy.

While Moses was in the mountain forty days and forty nights, Jehovah watched the people of Israel down below. As God showed Moses the true tabernacle of glory in heaven, he saw the people of Israel ignore his pillar of glory in the camp. As God showed Moses the plan for the table of shewbread, he saw the people of Israel spare no thought for his bread from heaven. As God showed Moses the consuming fire of the altar of burnt offering, he saw the people pay no mind to the devouring fire of his glory atop Sinai. As God engraved with his finger in the stone, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," he saw Israel make a golden calf. As God wrote again, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," he saw Israel rise up to play. God watched, and God saw. "I have seen this people."

God does not see as a man sees. A man sees only a little. God sees all. A man might see the sin of the golden calf. God sees the ugly heart

that could make such a thing. A man might see the drunken fornication. God sees the churning lust that could do such a thing. "I have seen this people," says God. It means: that is all there is to see! "I have seen this people" through and through. "I have seen this people" and all that they are. "I have seen this people" until there is nothing more of them to see.

"I have seen this people." And what did God see? "Behold, it is a stiffnecked people." Stiff-necked! A stubborn beast has a stiff neck. It will not submit to the yoke but stiffens itself against it. Such was Israel to its core. Stiff-necked. Unsubmissive. Stubborn. Self-willed. The burning letters in the stone tablets had not even cooled yet, and Israel had already disobeyed. "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them."

"I have seen this people." It is all that there is to see of man. There is no more to him than that. There is no hidden goodness to find. There is no corner of obedience to discover. There is no spark of life to catch sight of. There is only this: a stiff neck. In fact, there is only this: rigor mortis. Man's neck—our neck!—is stiff because man by nature is dead, and that is all. "I have seen this people."

What shall become of them? What shall become of us? Shall we perish in our sins? It is what we deserve! Ah, but let us hear the glad tidings of

the gospel concerning God's seeing. For our God has been pleased from eternity to eternity to see us in Jesus Christ. Giving us to Christ, imputing our sins to him, and imputing his righteousness to us, our God looks upon us and beholds only the perfect obedience and purity of our Lord. Yes, "I have seen this people." But hearken now

to the soul-gladdening news of what God sees of us in Christ. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them" (Num. 23:21).

—AL

EDITORIAL

Final Justification (2): The Final Judgment

The final judgment will be public and universal. Having returned from heaven on the clouds of glory and having raised the dead by his powerful voice, the Lord Jesus Christ will sit in judgment over all men who have ever lived. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:14). What a solemn and sober event it shall be, as all men are gathered before the throne of the exalted Christ to receive their judgment. Gathered there will be the mighty men of the world, whose names are etched in the history books: kings and princes, presidents and prime ministers, captains of industry and entertainment moguls, the famous and the infamous. Gathered there will also be the unknown men of the world, who lived and toiled and died without the public ever knowing that they drew breath. Gathered there will be the reprobate, for whom God has prepared the lake of fire. Gathered there will be the elect, for whom God has prepared paradise. All men who have ever lived will appear before the exalted Lord. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). "Then all men will personally appear before this great Judge, both men and woman and children, that have been from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, being summoned by the voice of

the archangel and by the sound of the trumpet of God" (Belgic Confession 37).

Jesus Christ will judge all men on behalf of God. The verdict that Christ expresses concerning each man will be the verdict of the living God. From the beginning of world, God has been the great judge. God judged in the garden of Eden after Adam and Eve sinned. God judged Cain and Abel regarding their sacrifices. God judged the world in the days of Noah with the flood. God judged the enemies of Israel—Edom, Philistia, Moab, and Ammon. God judged his people Israel by sending the Assyrians. God judged his people Judah by sending the Babylonians. And then God judged Assyria and Babylon. Generation after generation, age after age, God is the judge of men. "The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men" (Ps. 11:4). At the final judgment as well, all men will be judged by God. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God" (Rev. 20:11–12).

God will judge all men through Jesus Christ. Although the judgment and verdict belong to God, he has appointed his beloved Son to judge on his behalf. Jesus is the Christ—the anointed—who functions as God's officebearer. With perfect faithfulness to God's will and God's decree, Jesus will set all men before himself and judge them.

By appointing Christ to the throne of judgment, God honors Christ.

For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. (John 5:21–23)

By appointing Christ to the throne of judgment, God also glorifies himself. For in the day of judgment, all the men who reviled Christ and his cause throughout the ages will bow the knee before this Christ and confess that he truly is Lord. By this they will publicly declare that God’s cause was always right and their cause was always wrong.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:9–11)

In the final judgment Jesus Christ will declare God’s verdict concerning every man. The verdict concerning all his elect people shall be, “Blessed of my Father” (Matt. 25:34). The verdict shall be, “Righteous” (v. 46). The verdict concerning all the reprobate shall be, “Cursed” (v. 41). Concerning their keeping of the law of love, the verdict shall be, “Ye did it not” (v. 45). As a result of these verdicts, Jesus Christ will send all men to their final states. The blessed elect shall enter into glory in the new heavens and earth, and the cursed reprobate will be sent to hell forever. “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (v. 46).

The topic of final justification has to do with the verdict that Jesus Christ will pronounce at the final judgment. God’s people have this comfort regarding that verdict: “Their innocence shall be known to all.” And this comfort: “Their cause, which is now condemned by many judges and magistrates as heretical and impious, will then be known to be the cause of the Son of God” (Belgic Confession 37). To that verdict we turn next time.

(To be continued)

—AL



You are cordially invited to:

Two free Public Lectures

First Lecture:

GOD'S EVERLASTING COVENANT OF GRACE

God said to Noah, "I establish my covenant with you" (Gen. 9:9). God said to Abraham, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee" (Gen. 17:7). God said about Isaac, "My covenant will I establish with Isaac" (Gen. 17:21). God speaks about his "covenant with Jacob" (Lev. 26:42). The Bible calls the New Testament "a new covenant" (Heb. 8:13). The covenant must be very important, since God so often speaks of it. But what is God's covenant, and what does it mean for God's people?

God's covenant is the relationship of friendship that he establishes with his people in Jesus Christ. The truth of God's covenant is good news for us who are sinful and lonely and unsatisfied here on this earth. For the truth of the covenant means that God, in Jesus Christ, graciously makes his people his own children and dwells with us in blessed fellowship forever. How wonderful is God's covenant!

We cordially invite you to join us for a public lecture explaining and rejoicing in God's everlasting covenant of grace.

Second Lecture:

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ADAM

God's covenant with Adam is a much-discussed but little-understood truth of God's everlasting covenant of grace with his people in Christ. Was God's covenant with Adam a covenant of works? Or was it a covenant of grace? Or was it something else? Was God's covenant with Adam a covenant under the law? Or was it a covenant of promise? Could Adam merit with God? Can Christ? The questions multiply and many answers are proposed, and confusion sets in. But what is the truth of God's covenant with Adam?

We cordially invite you to join us for a public lecture in which we seek to bring the clarity of the gospel to bear on the truth of God's covenant with Adam.

Speaker: Rev Andrew Lanning
Date: 20 June 2026 (Saturday)
Time: 10 a.m.

Speaker: Rev Andrew Lanning
Date: 27 June 2026 (Saturday)
Time: 10 a.m.

Programme: Each lecture will be followed by Q&A, fellowship and refreshments.

Venue: 51 Cuppage Road, #03-03, S(229469). Room: **Valor**.

Directions: **Somerset MRT station**, Exit D; and it is behind The Centrepoint.

Buses to **Concorde Hotel**: 7, 14, 16, 65, 77, 106, 111, 174, 175, 190, 972. Walk to Koek Road, keep left through to the end (total distance, approx. 330m).

Organisers: Remnant Reformed Church (USA), with Remnant Reformed Fellowship of Singapore.

Contacts: *WhatsApp*, 8960 4637 *Email*, sgchristian137@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.remnantreformedchurch.org/>

Article CLXIII: The Seven Churches of Asia: The Church That Lost Its First Love (continued)

Following this self-announcement of Jesus comes the description of the peculiar condition of the congregation, usually headed by an enumeration of the good features, wherever that is possible. To this general rule, however, the church of Laodicea forms an exception, since nothing commendable is to be found in her, while the congregation of Sardis is almost in the same position except for that fact that in her midst there are still a few faithful. On the other hand, both the churches of Smyrna and of Philadelphia are distinguished from the others in that they offer no cause for rebuke and threat of judgment, but only of praise and promise of reward. And finally, each letter concludes with an admonition containing a promise for the faithful or penitent and a threat of judgment in case of unfaithfulness and impenitence.

Turning now our attention to the first of the letters, the one addressed to the church in Ephesus, we find that it presents the picture of the church that lost its first love. Let us consider:

- I. The Commendable Features of This Church;
- II. Its Serious Lack of Love;
- III. The Admonition It Receives.

I. The church in Ephesus is the first addressed. Ephesus was a city of importance some forty or fifty miles distant from Patmos, the isle where John received his visions. It was rich in trade and commerce, famous because of its development in art and science, but also notorious because of its shameful idolatry, its well known temple in honor of the goddess Diana, its frivolity and worldly-mindedness in general. It was one of the great cities of that time, perhaps best compared

to the modern metropolitan city known to us, with all its wealth and luxury and amusements, but also with all its carelessness and unbecoming levity of life, its vice and social evils. In that city a congregation had been established of which there is every reason to believe that it used to be one of the strongest and most flourishing churches ever founded. It had been privileged to enjoy the labors of some of the greatest and ablest, most devoted servants of the Lord that ever lived. Paul had been there three times, at first only for a short period, but during his second missionary journey abiding with the church for a period of well nigh three years, during which he himself testifies to have labored day and night preaching unto them the full counsel of God. There Timothy, the spiritual son of the great apostle, had labored to follow up the work of his spiritual father, and there also the apostle whom Jesus loved had spent many a year in hard and faithful labor. To speak in terms of our own time, the church in Ephesus had enjoyed the labors of the best and most excellent preachers of the time, and he that holds the seven stars in his right hand had blessed the church abundantly.

Nor had the labors of these great ministers of Christ been without effect upon the congregation. On the contrary, even at the time when John is commissioned to write to them this letter, the influence of their work is still plainly visible in the church. For first of all it must be observed that Ephesus was a church sound and strong in doctrine. This is evident from the description Jesus, who admittedly knows the church better than any human preacher, gives of her in this epistle. In the first place let me call your attention to the important sentence of Jesus: "Thou hast

tried them that call themselves apostles and are not and hast found them false.” Clear it is that in these words we may find an indication of the doctrinal soundness and development of the church in Ephesus first of all. True, they also imply a case of discipline, but notice that it is a case of discipline exercised over those that call themselves apostles, an exercise of the key power because of the truth. True apostles were men with special authority, infallibly guided by the Spirit so that they could speak the Word of God. For that reason their word possessed the infallibility and authority of the King of the church himself. Of this the congregation of that time were conscious, as is evident from many a portion in Scripture. They made a clear distinction between the word of an apostle, spoken in the name of the Lord, and the word of others. For that reason Paul so ardently defends his apostleship in some of his epistles. Whenever the enemy meant to neutralize his influence in the churches, he first of all made an attack upon the apostleship of the great preacher and missionary of the Gentiles, aware of the fact that in doing so they would at the same time undermine his authority. Now the epistle to Ephesus informs us of the fact that there had been men in the congregation that called themselves apostles. Naturally they assumed this title and claimed the prerogative of being apostles for a certain purpose, for the purpose, evidently, of exercising apostolic authority in the church. They claimed to be divinely inspired, they claimed apostolic infallibility for their teaching. The case was, therefore, thus, that there were men in the church of Ephesus that taught a false doctrine and for that doctrine claimed apostolic authority. Fundamentally it was a question of truth, of doctrine, no doubt. Who these men were the letter does not mention, but we are inclined to believe that they were the same as the Nicolaitans mentioned later. However this may be, certain it

is that they taught a doctrine different from that of the apostles and sought acceptance for it in the church of Ephesus. But the latter had tried them, had tested their doctrine. Perhaps they had an official trial of these false apostles.

At any rate, the result of it all had been that they had detected their error, had pointed out their heresy, and had exposed them as being false teachers and impostors. The conclusion, therefore, is fully justified that the church in Ephesus was, in the first place, sound in doctrine, well-founded in the truth of the gospel. How otherwise could they have exposed the errors of these false apostles? Only those that know the truth, that are founded in sound doctrine, can detect the lie whenever it presents itself to them as the truth. Where knowledge of the truth is lacking and the church is weak in doctrine, it is exposed to any and every heresy that comes along without being able to offer successful resistance. That is why the church of today is in such a pitiable condition. There is no development in the truth, no knowledge of, no love for the doctrine of the Word, and hence it is so easily seduced and led about by all sorts of false doctrines. Not so the church in Ephesus. There was knowledge of the truth there. And if there was knowledge of the truth, there must have been diligent study of the Scriptures and continual education in the principles of the truth. Where study and searching of the Scriptures, where sound and continual education in good doctrine are on the wane, maintenance of the truth is inconceivable. All these, then, were found in the church under discussion. They understood the truth definitely so that they were able between truth and falsehood to pass correct judgment upon those that called themselves apostles and were not. It was a church strong in doctrine.

(To be continued)

