



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 it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the LORD plagued the people because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

—Exodus 32:30–35

Blot Me Out

The morning after the golden calf, Moses announced that he must go back up the mountain. Jehovah still dwelled on the top of Sinai, and Moses must speak to him about Israel’s great sin.

Back up the mount went Moses and returned unto the Lord. What would Moses say? What was there to say at such a time, after such a sin? Moses fell down before Jehovah and said nothing. He was afraid of the anger of the Lord, which burned around him as hot displeasure. Jehovah’s anger was not only for all Israel but for Aaron as well, to the point where Israel and Aaron might be destroyed. For forty days and forty nights, Moses lay before Jehovah, fasting from all food and drink, astonished at Israel’s sin and afraid of God’s wrath (Deut. 9:17–20, 25).

But Moses knew the name of God, and thus Moses knew that there was mercy with God. For the God whose wrath burned upon Sinai was Jehovah! Moses had gone “up unto the LORD” (Ex. 32:30). He is the great I AM THAT I AM. He is the God who keeps covenant and mercy with his people forever. He is the God whose word of salvation is sure and whose covenant promise stands. And this God was Israel’s God! As the psalmist would sing many years later, so Moses knew already on Sinai: “But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared” (Ps. 130:4).

And Moses knew that forgiveness with God was through the deep way of atonement. Atonement! Payment! Covering! For atonement is an appropriate payment by which the sin is fully avenged by God, by which his justice is satisfied regarding the sin, and by which the sin is covered before him. Before Moses returned to God in the mount, Moses had spoken to Israel of such an atonement. “Peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin” (Ex. 32:30).

Knowing this God, at the end of forty days, Moses spoke: “Oh! This people have sinned a great sin!” Yes, this is what Moses must say before the covenant-keeping God. This is repentance. This is the outpouring of a broken spirit and a contrite heart. “Oh! We have sinned a great sin!” It is acknowledgement and confession of sin to God. It is hatred of that sin and sorrow before Jehovah. “Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold” (Ex. 32:31). And God would visit Israel with a plague as a chastisement upon his people, in order that they might learn the wretchedness and folly of their sin.

Moses offered himself as an atonement to cover Israel’s sins. “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written” (Ex. 32:32). Moses offered the absolute limits of what a mere man can give. Moses the mere man offered his life for

his fellow men. He offered his name to be blotted out of God's book of life that his brethren's names might not be blotted out. The forty days and forty nights indicate that Moses' life was the full extent of what he could offer, for forty represents the absolute limits of the earthly. However, what Moses was willing to do, he was not able to accomplish. Even the absolute limits of a mere man—even his life—cannot blot out the sin of his brethren. “For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever” (Ps. 49:8).

But there is an atonement! And although God did not blot out Moses, he did cover Israel's sin. For Moses was a type of Jesus Christ. As Moses the type was willing to be blotted out of God's book, so our Lord Jesus Christ the fulfillment came to do God's

will and to give himself as the atoning sacrifice. “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God...By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:9–10). And in Jesus Christ there is complete atonement for God's people. For Jesus is the man who is not a mere man. Jesus is the man who is the eternal word made flesh (John 1:14). And being the Son of God with power to save, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13). Therefore in Jesus Christ, God's promise to lead Israel into the land of Canaan was sure. For “mine Angel shall go before thee” (Ex. 32:34).

Behold the grace of our God! The people had sinned a great sin. But God's grace abounded more!

—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.

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Article CLXVII: The Seven Churches in Asia: The Church in Tribulation

And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

These things saith the First and the Last, who was dead and lived again: I know thy tribulation and thy poverty (but thou art rich) and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. — Rev. 2:8–11

The city of Smyrna, where the church is found to which the Lord Jesus addresses his second letter, was located north from Ephesus approximately as far distant from this latter city as Grand Rapids is from Holland. As to business and industry, it might well rival with Ephesus for the honor of being considered the first city of that time. No doubt, it must be largely attributed to this fact that there were many Jews living in Smyrna, who, as usual, belonged to the well-to-do and influential class of people in the city. Also here there had been founded a church of Jesus Christ, just as in the city of Ephesus. But a comparison of the two letters that are written to these congregations respectively will show that there was quite a difference between them. In the first place, there was a difference outwardly as to their relation to the outside world. Of Ephesus we receive the impression that also in an external sense it was a rather strong congregation, large and

flourishing, even able to assert and maintain itself over against the world from without to a certain extent. True, also in its case the Lord suggested that it was subject to the ill will and mockery of the world, for he speaks of their patience and power to bear, but we do not get the impression that it was persecuted at the time by an overwhelming power in the world.

With Smyrna, however, this is quite different. Of this church we are told that it is poor and in tribulation, that the people of God in the city were slandered and falsely accused, that they were persecuted and killed all the day long. But in the second place, there evidently is also a marked spiritual difference that is worthy of our attention. Of Smyrna we read that it was rich, though it was poor, of Ephesus that it had left its first love. In the case of Ephesus we read that the Lord has something against it; nothing of the kind is found in the letter to Smyrna. Ephesus is warned with a threat that the candlestick will be removed out of its place if it does not repent, Smyrna receives nothing but the most beautiful and comforting promises. In every respect we have in Smyrna a portraiture of the church in tribulation. We consider:

- I. Its External Position in the World;
- II. Its Inward Spiritual Condition;
- III. The Message of Encouragement It Receives.

I. The external position of the church in Smyrna and her relation to the world is indicated first of all in the words: “I know thy tribulation.” The word employed in the original denotes a condition of oppression, of being hard pressed, of being in narrow straits. It indicates that the world from without exerted a pressure upon the little congregation that was well-nigh unbearable, that

threatened to leave it no standing room in the city. The world hated it, and from every side that world pressed the church in Smyrna hard, with a view to its ultimate destruction. The world persecuted it, revealed its hatred and contempt in various ways, and caused the members of the congregation to suffer because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. And it seems that at this time the persecution was first of all a social one. It does not seem that the people of God in Smyrna were already brought to scaffold and stake at the time this letter was addressed to them. That was a form of persecution still in the future. Now they were made the victims of a social persecution.

In the first place, an indication of this is found in the words “and thy poverty.” The church of Smyrna was poor, not spiritually but materially and socially. Spiritually they were rich, as the Lord informs us, but socially they were poor. Perhaps they already experienced a foretaste of that form of persecution which will be dominant at the time of the supreme and ultimate manifestation of Antichrist, when the people that refuse to receive the mark of the beast and the number of his name shall be allowed neither to buy nor to sell.

I imagine, especially under the influence of the influential Jews, they were deprived of many privileges which others enjoyed. They could not do business as others did; they could make no headway in the world from a material and social standpoint, as could the Jews. Perhaps even they were directly deprived of some of their property, their goods were confiscated because of their testimony of Jesus. At any rate, the church of Smyrna was poor. They had no social standing. They were not rich in earthly possessions. Perhaps they gathered for public worship in a miserable little shanty of a church and could not even decently provide for the necessities of the angel of the church. With difficulty it was that they could maintain themselves as a church in the city.

This social character of their tribulation is indicated still further in the words “and the blasphemy of those that say they are Jews, but are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.” They were slandered, blasphemed, reproached, and reviled.

The Jews that no doubt could exercise a subtle influence in the city utilized every opportunity to revile the name of the members of the little congregation. Exactly what was the nature of their slander we are not directly informed. Yet we may surmise the form of reproach. The Lord describes the blasphemers, in the first place, as those that call themselves Jews and are not. No doubt they belonged to the nation of the Jews. In a national sense they were children of Abraham. And they were proud of this prerogative. They made it a special claim that they were the people of God over against the Christians, who were impostors. From this may be inferred to a certain extent the character of their revilement. They publicly called themselves Jews. They openly proclaimed that they and they only were the people of God, that they still expected their own king, the Messiah, and that for that very reason the Christians who claimed that the Messiah had already come were nothing but a dangerous sect, dangerous because they might instigate the people of Smyrna to rebellion by their doctrine.

At the same time they perhaps emphasized the fact that the Messiah of the Christians was a crucified criminal, something that must have been extremely horrifying and repulsive to the rest of Smyrna’s population. However this may have been, certain it is that the slander of those Jews was directed against the Christians for the sake of their testimony of Jesus. They slandered in bitter hatred of the Christ that had come. For although they called themselves Jews, they were not. Not the national descendants of Abraham are Jews in the new dispensation, but those that partake of the faith of the father of believers and are justified in Christ.

But this the so-called Jews despised. They did not believe in their Messiah, they rejected him, they crucified him again, they trampled under foot the blood of the new covenant. And so they were no Jews. On the contrary, they were a synagogue of Satan, the Lord informs us. No doubt the Jews possessed a synagogue in the city. Literally the word “synagogue” signifies simply an assembly of men. And, therefore, literally Jesus characterizes

these Jews in the letter as an assembly that have been gathered by and under the leadership of Satan. He is their chief and their leader; he inspires them in all they do; he is, therefore, also their instigator as they so malignantly slander the name of the Christians. And also from this fact may be determined what was the nature of this malicious slander. For Satan is the opponent of God and his Christ. His very name means adversary. And as he had gained the leadership in the synagogue of the Jews and instigated them to their pernicious blasphemy, you may easily infer the nature of the reproach that was cast into the teeth of the little church. Their slander assumed a decidedly anti-Christian character. They were reviled for Christ's sake. As Christians, as followers of the despised Jesus of Nazareth, these people had to bear the reproach of the Jews and, no doubt, also of the world. They were the objects of bitter hatred and invidious contempt.

But there is more. The highest point of their suffering had not yet been reached. They were poor and slandered, social outcasts in the city. But naturally this could not be the end. The malignity of the synagogue of the devil could not be satisfied by mere words. No, even as this malevolent slander had its root in the bitter hatred against the Christ and his church, so it could not cease before it had developed into actual persecution. Jesus forewarns them of this coming tribulation. "Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer," thus he writes; "behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days." Perhaps the poor and slandered people of the church in Smyrna themselves had a presentiment of the suffering

and persecution that was to come in the near future. Hardly could it be different. Persecution of the church does not generally break out all of a sudden without any precursory signs. And these harbingers of a coming persecution the people of God in Smyrna possessed in the slander from the side of the evil-minded and spiteful Jews. Dark clouds must have been gathering at the horizon at this time. The form of the message they receive, too, indicates that the days of persecution are not far off, and that they must have been within the range of the vision of these Christians at Smyrna. They are "**about** to suffer" some things, the devil is "**about** to cast some of them into prison." The very atmosphere is pregnant with indications that persecution is on the verge of breaking out. And the hearts of the poor Christians in Smyrna must have been filled with dark and gloomy apprehensions of the near future. Perhaps the Jews were already plotting against their lives and rumors of the conspiracy against the followers of Jesus of Nazareth reached the ears of the latter. Perhaps these ill-willed Jews had promised money and business advantages to the municipal authorities if they would lay their hand on the hated members of the Christian church in the city. And even as the black clouds gathering above our heads make us apprehensive of the first sudden streak of lightning and loud clap of thunder, so the people of God in Smyrna must have been cognizant of the fact that tribulation was about to come and the hatred of persecution was about to burst forth over their heads.

(To be continued)

