



Volume 8 Issue 10

West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church



October 2021

Thoughtfully Reformed - Redemptively Relevant

What is Reformation Day?

A single event on a single day changed the world. It was October 31, 1517. Brother Martin, a monk and a scholar, had struggled for years with his church, the church in Rome. He had been greatly disturbed by an unprecedented indulgence sale. The story has all the makings of a Hollywood blockbuster. Let's meet the cast.

First, there is the young bishop—too young by church laws—Albert of Mainz. Not only was he bishop over two bishoprics, he desired an additional archbishopric over Mainz. This, too, was against church laws. So Albert appealed to the pope in Rome, Leo X. From the De Medici family, Leo X greedily allowed his tastes to exceed his financial resources. Enter the artists and sculptors, Raphael and Michelangelo.

When Albert of Mainz appealed for a papal dispensation, Leo X was ready to deal. Albert, with the papal blessing, would sell indulgences for past, present, and future sins. All of this sickened the monk Martin Luther. Can we buy our way into heaven? Luther had to speak out.

But why October 31? November 1 held a special place in the church calendar as All Saints' Day. On November 1, 1517, a massive exhibit of newly acquired relics would be on display at Wittenberg, Luther's home city. Pilgrims would come from all over, genuflect before the relics, and take hundreds, if not thousands, of years off time in purgatory. Luther's soul grew even more vexed. None of this seemed right.

Martin Luther, a scholar, took quill in hand, dipped it in his inkwell and penned his Ninety-Five Theses on October 31, 1517. These were intended to spark a debate, to stir some soul-searching among his fellow brothers in the church. The Ninety-Five Theses sparked far more than a debate. The Ninety-Five Theses also revealed the church was far beyond rehabilitation. It needed a reformation. The church—and the world—would never be the same.

One of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses simply declares, "The Church's true treasure is the gospel of Jesus Christ." That alone is the meaning of Reformation Day. The church had lost sight of the gospel because it had long ago papered over the pages of God's Word with layer upon layer of tradition. Mere tradition often brings about systems of works, of earning your way back to God. It was true of the Pharisees, and it was true of medieval Roman Catholicism. Didn't Christ Himself say, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light"? Reformation Day celebrates the joyful beauty of the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ.

What is Reformation Day? It is the day the light of the gospel broke forth out of darkness. It was the day that began the Protestant Reformation. It was a day that led to Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, and many other Reformers helping the church find its way back to God's Word as the only supreme authority for faith and life and leading the church back to the glorious doctrines of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It kindled the fires of missionary endeavors, it led to hymn writing and congregational singing, and it led to the centrality of the sermon and preaching for the people of God. It is the celebration of a theological, ecclesiastical, and cultural transformation.

So we celebrate Reformation Day. This day reminds us to be thankful for our past and to the monk turned Reformer. What's more, this day reminds us of our duty, our obligation, to keep the light of the gospel at the center of all we do. ~ **Dr. Stephen J. Nichols**



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Fueling the Reformation

I'm always puzzled when I see church billboards announcing a coming revival. They give the times and the dates when the church will be engaged in revival. But I wonder, how can anybody possibly schedule a revival? True revivals are provoked by the sovereign work of God through the stirring of His Holy Spirit in the hearts of people. They happen when the Holy Spirit comes into the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37) and exerts His power to bring new life, a revivification of the spiritual life of the people of God.

This kind of thing cannot be manipulated by any human program. Historically, no one scheduled the Protestant Reformation. The Welsh revival was not on anyone's agenda, nor was the American Great Awakening penciled into someone's date book. These epic events in church history resulted from the sovereign work of God, who brought His power to bear on churches that had become virtually moribund.

But we have to understand the difference between revival and reformation. Revival, as the word suggests, means a renewing of life. When evangelism is a priority in the church, such outreach will often bring about revival. However, these revivals of spiritual life do not always result in reformation. Reformation indicates changing forms of church and society. Revivals grow into reformations when the impact of the gospel begins to change the structures of the culture. Revival can produce a multitude of new Christians, but these new Christians have to grow into maturity before they begin to make a significant impact on the surrounding culture.

Reformation can involve a change for the better. We must not be so naïve as to think that all change is necessarily good. Sometimes when we feel that we are in the doldrums or that progress has been stultified, we cry out for change, forgetting for the moment that change may be regressive rather than progressive. If I drink a vial of poison, it will change me, but not for the better. Nevertheless, change is often good.

In our day, we have seen the rise of what has been called the "New Calvinism," which tends to focus primarily on the so-called five points of Calvinism. This movement within the church has attracted a great deal of attention, even in the secular media.

Yet it would be wise to not identify Calvinism exhaustively with those five points. Rather, the five points function as a pathway or a bridge to the entire structure of Reformed theology. Charles Spurgeon himself argued that Calvinism is merely a nickname for biblical theology. He and many other titans of the past understood that the essence of Reformed theology cannot be reduced to five particular points that arose centuries ago in Holland in response to controversy with the Arminians, who objected to five specific points of the system of doctrine found in historic Calvinism. For the purposes of this article, it might be helpful to look at both what Reformed theology is and is not.

Reformed theology is not a chaotic set of disconnected ideas. Rather, Reformed theology is systematic. The Bible, being the Word of God, reflects the coherence and unity of the God whose Word it is. To be sure, it would be a distortion to force a foreign system of thought upon Scripture, making Scripture conform to it as if it were some kind of procrustean bed. That is not the goal of sound systematic theology. Rather, true systematic theology seeks to understand the system of theology that is contained within the whole scope of sacred Scripture. It does not impose ideas upon the Bible; it listens to the ideas that are proclaimed by the Bible and understands them in a coherent way.



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Reformed theology is not anthropocentric. That is to say, Reformed theology is not centered on human beings. The central focal point of Reformed theology is God, and the doctrine of God permeates the whole of Reformed thought. Thus, Reformed theology, by way of affirmation, can be called theocentric. Indeed, its understanding of the character of God is primary and determinant with respect to its understanding of all other doctrines. That is to say, its understanding of salvation has as its control factor — its heart — a particular understanding of God’s sovereign character.

Reformed theology is not anticatholic. This may seem strange since Reformed theology grew directly out of the Protestant movement against the teaching and activity of Roman Catholicism. But the term catholic refers to catholic Christianity, the essence of which may be found in the ecumenical creeds of the first thousand years of church history, particularly those of the early church councils, such as the Council of Nicea in the fourth century and the Council of Chalcedon in the fifth century. That is to say, those creeds contain common articles of faith shared by all denominations that embrace orthodox Christianity, doctrines such as the Trinity and the atonement of Christ. The doctrines affirmed by all Christians are at the heart and core of Calvinism. Calvinism does not depart on a search for a new theology and reject the common base of theology that the whole church shares.

Reformed theology is not Roman Catholic in its understanding of justification. This is simply to say that Reformed theology is evangelical in the historical sense of the word. In this regard, Reformed theology stands strongly and firmly with Martin Luther and the magisterial Reformers in their articulation of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, as well as the doctrine of sola Scriptura. Neither of these doctrines is explicitly declared in the five points of Calvinism; yet, in a sense, they become part of the foundation for the other characteristics of Reformed theology.

All this is to say that Reformed theology so far transcends the mere five points of Calvinism that it is an entire worldview. It is covenantal. It is sacramental. It is committed to transforming culture. It is subordinate to the operation of God the Holy Spirit, and it has a rich framework for understanding the entirety of the counsel of God revealed in the Bible.

So it should go without saying that the most important development that will bring about reformation is not simply the revival of Calvinism. What has to happen is the renewal of the understanding of the gospel itself. It is when the gospel is clearly proclaimed in all of its fullness that God exercises His redeeming power to bring about renewal in the church and in the world. It is in the gospel and nowhere else that God has given His power unto salvation.

If we want reformation, we have to start with ourselves. We have to start bringing the gospel itself out of darkness, so that the motto of every reformation becomes post tenebras lux — “after darkness, light.” Luther declared that every generation must declare freshly the gospel of the New Testament. He also said that anytime the gospel is clearly and boldly proclaimed, it will bring about conflict, and those of us who are inherently adverse to conflict will find it tempting to submerge the gospel, dilute the gospel, or obscure the gospel in order to avoid conflict. We, of course, are able to add offense to the gospel by our own ill-mannered attempts to proclaim it. But there is no way to remove the offense that is inherent to the gospel message, because it is a stumbling block, a scandal to a fallen world. It will inevitably bring conflict. If we want reformation, we must be prepared to endure such conflict to the glory of God. ~ *Dr. R. C. Sproul, Sr.*



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What is Reformation Day all about?

On October 31, much of the culture will be focused on candy and things that go bump in the night. Protestants, however, have something far more significant to celebrate on October 31. It's Reformation day, which commemorates what was perhaps the greatest move of God's Spirit since the days of the Apostles. But what is the significance of Reformation Day, and how should we consider the events it commemorates?

At the time, few would have suspected that the sound of a hammer striking the castle church door in Wittenberg, Germany, would soon be heard around the world and lead ultimately to the greatest transformation of Western society since the apostles first preached the Gospel throughout the Roman empire. Martin Luther's nailing of his ninety-five theses to the church door on October 31, 1517, provoked a debate that culminated finally in what we now call the Protestant Reformation.

An heir of Bishop Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther is one of the most significant figures God has raised up since that time. This law student turned Augustinian monk became the center of a great controversy after his theses were copied and distributed throughout Europe. Initially protesting the pope's attempt to sell salvation, Luther's study of Scripture soon led him to oppose the church of Rome on issues including the primacy of the Bible over church tradition and the means by which we are found righteous in the sight of God.

This last issue is probably Luther's most significant contribution to Christian theology. Though preached clearly in the New Testament and found in the writings of many of the church fathers, the medieval bishops and priests had largely forgotten the truth that our own good works can by no means merit God's favor. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, and good works result from our faith, they are not added to it as the grounds for our right standing in the Lord's eyes (Ephesians 2:8-10). Justification, God's declaration that we are not guilty, forgiven of sin, and righteous in His sight comes because through our faith alone the Father imputes, or reckons to our account, the perfect righteousness of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Martin Luther's rediscovery of this truth led to a whole host of other church and societal reforms and much of what we take for granted in the West would have likely been impossible had he never graced the scene. Luther's translation of the Bible into German put the Word of God in the hands of the people, and today Scripture is available in the vernacular language of many countries, enabling lay people to study it with profit. He reformed the Latin mass by putting the liturgy in the common tongue so that non-scholars could hear and understand the preached word of God and worship the Lord with clarity. Luther lifted the unbiblical ban on marriage for the clergy and by his own teaching and example radically transformed the institution itself. He recaptured the biblical view of the priesthood of all believers, showing all people that their work had purpose and dignity because in it they can serve their Creator.

Today, Luther's legacy lives on in the creeds and confessions of Protestant bodies worldwide. As we consider his importance this Reformation Day, let us equip ourselves to be knowledgeable proclaimers and defenders of biblical truth. May we be eager to preach the Gospel of God to the world and thereby spark a new reformation of church and culture. ~ **Robert Rothwell, Associate editor of *Tabletalk* magazine, senior writer for *Ligonier Ministries*, and resident adjunct professor for *Reformation Bible College***



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Is the Reformation Over?

There have been several observations rendered on this subject by those I would call “erstwhile evangelicals.” One of them wrote, “Luther was right in the sixteenth century, but the question of justification is not an issue now.” A second self-confessed evangelical made a comment in a press conference I attended that “the sixteenth-century Reformation debate over justification by faith alone was a tempest in a teapot.” Still another noted European theologian has argued in print that the doctrine of justification by faith alone is no longer a significant issue in the church. We are faced with a host of people who are defined as Protestants but who have evidently forgotten altogether what it is they are protesting.

Contrary to some of these contemporary assessments of the importance of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, we recall a different perspective by the sixteenth-century magisterial Reformers. Luther made his famous comment that the doctrine of justification by faith alone is the article upon which the church stands or falls. John Calvin added a different metaphor, saying that justification is the hinge upon which everything turns. In the twentieth century, J.I. Packer used a metaphor indicating that justification by faith alone is the “Atlas upon whose shoulder every other doctrine stands.” Later Packer moved away from that strong metaphor and retreated to a much weaker one, saying that justification by faith alone is “the fine print of the gospel.”

The question we have to face in light of these discussions is, what has changed since the sixteenth century? Well, there is good news and there is bad news. The good news is that people have become much more civil and tolerant in theological disputes. We don’t see people being burned at the stake or tortured on the rack over doctrinal differences. We’ve also seen in the past years that the Roman communion has remained solidly steadfast on other key issues of Christian orthodoxy, such as the deity of Christ, His substitutionary atonement, and the inspiration of the Bible, while many Protestant liberals have abandoned these particular doctrines wholesale. We also see that Rome has remained steadfast on critical moral issues such as abortion and ethical relativism. In the nineteenth century at Vatican Council I, Rome referred to Protestants as “heretics and schismatics.” In the twentieth century at Vatican II, Protestants were referred to as “separated brethren.” We see a marked contrast in the tone of the different councils. The bad news, however, is that many doctrines that divided orthodox Protestants from Roman Catholics centuries ago have been declared dogma since the sixteenth century. Virtually all of the significant Mariology decrees have been declared in the last 150 years. The doctrine of papal infallibility, though it de facto functioned long before its formal definition, was nevertheless formally defined and declared de fide (necessary to believe for salvation) in 1870 at Vatican Council I. We also see that in recent years the Roman communion has published a new Catholic catechism, which unequivocally reaffirms the doctrines of the Council of Trent, including Trent’s definition of the doctrine of justification (and thus affirms that council’s anathemas against the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone). Along with the reaffirmations of Trent have come a clear reaffirmation of the Roman doctrine of purgatory, indulgences, and the treasury of merits.

At a discussion among leading theologians over the issue of the continued relevance of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, Michael Horton asked the question: “What is it in the last decades that has made the first-century gospel unimportant?” The dispute over justification was not over a technical point of theology that could be consigned to the fringes of the depository of biblical truth. Nor could it be seen simply as a tempest in a teapot. This tempest extended far beyond the tiny volume of a single teacup. The question, “what must I do to be saved?” is still a critical question for any person who is exposed to the wrath of God.



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Is the Reformation Over?

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Even more critical than the question is the answer, because the answer touches the very heart of gospel truth. In the final analysis, the Roman Catholic Church affirmed at Trent and continues to affirm now that the basis by which God will declare a person just or unjust is found in one's "inherent righteousness." If righteousness does not inhere in the person, that person at worst goes to hell and at best (if any impurities remain in his life) goes to purgatory for a time that may extend to millions of years. In bold contrast to that, the biblical and Protestant view of justification is that the sole grounds of our justification is the righteousness of Christ, which righteousness is imputed to the believer, so that the moment a person has authentic faith in Christ, all that is necessary for salvation becomes theirs by virtue of the imputation of Christ's righteousness. The fundamental issue is this: is the basis by which I am justified a righteousness that is my own? Or is it a righteousness that is, as Luther said, "an alien righteousness," a righteousness that is extra nos, apart from us—the righteousness of another, namely, the righteousness of Christ? From the sixteenth century to the present, Rome has always taught that justification is based upon faith, on Christ, and on grace. The difference, however, is that Rome continues to deny that justification is based on Christ alone, received by faith alone, and given by grace alone. The difference between these two positions is the difference between salvation and its opposite. There is no greater issue facing a person who is alienated from a righteous God.

At the moment the Roman Catholic Church condemned the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone, she denied the gospel and ceased to be a legitimate church, regardless of all the rest of her affirmations of Christian orthodoxy. To embrace her as an authentic church while she continues to repudiate the biblical doctrine of salvation is a fatal attribution. We're living in a time where theological conflict is considered politically incorrect, but to declare peace when there is no peace is to betray the heart and soul of the gospel. ~ *Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr.*

The Morning Star of the Reformation

He had been dead and buried for a few decades, but the church wanted to make a point. His remains were exhumed and burned, a fitting end for the "heretic" John Wycliffe. Wycliffe once explained what the letters in the title CARDINAL really mean: "Captain of the Apostates of the Realm of the Devil, Impudent and Nefarious Ally of Lucifer." And with that, Wycliffe was only getting started.

Wycliffe rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, which states that the elements of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper become the actual body and blood of Christ. He was against priestly absolution, he spoke out against indulgences, and he denied the doctrine of purgatory. He rejected papal authority. Instead, he asserted that Christ is the head of the church. And he had a profound belief in the inerrancy and absolute authority of Scripture. He fully believed that the church of his day had lost its way. Scripture alone provided the only way back. Now we see why the medieval Roman Church wanted to make a statement against Wycliffe.

John Wycliffe has often been called "the Morning Star of the Reformation." Jan Hus, another pre-Reformation reformer, felt obliged to express his supreme debt to Wycliffe. And though he lived long after Wycliffe's death, Martin Luther, too, felt an obligation to recognize the pioneering reforms of John Wycliffe. Luther stood on the shoulders of Hus, who stood on the shoulders of Wycliffe. Hus, Luther, and the other Reformers were indebted to him. So are we. Wycliffe was indeed "the Morning Star of the Reformation."



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The Morning Star of the Reformation *Continued from Page 6*

The term morning star has been used alternately to refer to either the star Sirius or the planet Venus. It appears brightest in the predawn, the time when darkness still dominates, but also the time of promise—the time of the promise of the dawn and the rising sun. So John Wycliffe is situated historically between the darkness and the morning light.

John Wycliffe was born around 1330 and died on December 30, 1384. His century was one of growing disillusionment with the medieval Roman church. There was disillusionment with the church hierarchy and also with the church's piety (or lack thereof). These were times of unrest. The long reign of the night, of the darkness, had taken its toll, especially on the laity. They bore the brunt of a wayward church. And perhaps none was more acutely aware of this than John Wycliffe.

Wycliffe's Studies

Oxford University became Wycliffe's home in 1346, during his teen years. As soon as Wycliffe arrived at Oxford, he witnessed all the pomp and circumstance of convocation, which included a Mass in honor of the royal family and the scholars at Oxford. Wycliffe then settled into the academic routines of attending lectures and disputations. Wycliffe would sit under and be profoundly influenced by the theologian Thomas Bradwardine and the philosopher William of Ockham. He studied broadly, learning science and mathematics; law and history; and, of course, philosophy. At Oxford, Wycliffe soon moved from the rank of student to that of scholar, later becoming master at Balliol College. Wycliffe's first writings would be in the field of philosophy.

Biblical studies, and later theology, however, captured his attention and piqued his interest the most. Wycliffe qualified as a doctor of theology, allowing him to lecture on the subject. He also became embroiled in church politics in the 1370s, the decade in which the crisis in the papacy would come to a head, ending the Avignon Papacy and marking the pope's return to Rome. Wycliffe drew upon his vast education, applying his keen mind and his philosophical competency to the pressing ecclesiastical and theological problems of his day.

Wycliffe's Theses

Luther famously had his "95 Theses." While not having quite as many, Wycliffe had his own theses (that is, arguments) against the church. One thesis declares, "There is one universal church, and outside of it there is no salvation. Its head is Christ. No pope may say that he is the head." For this and other ideas, Pope Gregory XI condemned Wycliffe.

But Wycliffe had friends in high places, and his condemnation had little effect. The mother of the boy king Richard II favored Wycliffe, as did John of Gaunt, the young king's uncle, who wielded significant influence. These supporters swayed Parliament against the pope and for Wycliffe. At Oxford, the students and faculty rallied to his support.

These controversies and censures did little to dissuade Wycliffe. In fact, they propelled him further into his studies and writings, resulting in even more compelling arguments against the religious status quo in favor of reforms. Later, the tide would turn against Wycliffe, and he and his followers would be persecuted.



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The Morning Star of the Reformation *Continued from Page 7*

Two important works penned during the 1370s had a significant and lasting influence. In the first, *On Divine Dominion* (likely written in 1373-74), Wycliffe levels arguments against papal authority. Any authority held in the church ultimately derives from maintaining fidelity to the Word of God. Authority that sidesteps or runs counter to God's Word is no authority at all and has no right to rule in the church, Wycliffe argued. In the second work, *On Civil Dominion* (likely written in 1375-76), Wycliffe makes a case for the civil authorities not to be at the mercy of the church. Instead, he argues that the patrons of the church, the royalty and nobility in England, need not financially support the church or church officials who are in error or corrupt. It is not surprising, then, that Pope Gregory XI condemned Wycliffe and his ideas.

These books of Wycliffe made their way onto the banned book list. But that didn't keep them from reaching Jan Hus. Wycliffe's books also influenced Martin Luther. Luther's *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* reflects ideas in *On Divine Dominion*, and Luther's *Advice to the German Nobility* reflects ideas in *On Civil Dominion*. Finally, Thomas Cranmer enlisted these "heretical" ideas in his efforts to persuade Henry VIII to break from the Roman Catholic Church and establish the Church of England. These were influential books indeed.

Wycliffe's Bible

Yet it would be other writings of Wycliffe that would have the most profound influence. In 1378, Wycliffe wrote *On the Truth of Sacred Scripture*. Here we see the beginnings of the doctrine so crucial to the Reformation: *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone). In this work, Wycliffe makes the case that all Christians have a right to the Word of God in their own language. Wycliffe so believed in this principle that he devoted his later years to translating the Latin Vulgate text into Middle English. He was joined by others, such as Nicholas of Hereford and John Purvey. These labors culminated in what would come to be Wycliffe's crowning achievement—the Wycliffe Bible.

The Wycliffe Bible consisted of hand-copied manuscripts—hundreds of them. They were put into service by Wycliffe's troupe of pastors, the so-called poor priests. They had very little to their name, and they likely were not all that impressive looking. A friend of Wycliffe once described him as having a "spare, ill, emaciated frame." His poor priests likely fared no better. But they had copies of the Bible.

Wycliffe's Legacy

These preachers came to be called Lollards. Soon that term was expanded to apply to those who followed Wycliffe's teachings. The Lollards grew and grew. "Every second man that you meet," the saying went, "is a Lollard."

Lollard is a Dutch word meaning "to mumble" or "to murmur." Since Wycliffe's followers were preaching and reading the Bible in English, not in Latin, they were derided as mumblers and murmurers. But they weren't mumbling. They were speaking the truth. The Lollards even had their Wittenberg Door moment, nailing a petition to the doors of Parliament's Westminster Hall in 1395. The Lollards extended Wycliffe's influence well beyond his lifetime, and even on into the British Reformation of the sixteenth century.



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The Morning Star of the Reformation *Continued from Page 8*

While attending church on December 28, 1384, Wycliffe suffered a severe stroke, his second. He died two days later. Post tenebras lux—"after darkness, light"—is the slogan representing the Reformation at Calvin's Geneva. The sun did rise in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and the light of the gospel chased the darkness away. But we can all be grateful for the pioneering efforts of the fourteenth-century Oxford scholar John Wycliffe, the Morning Star of the Reformation. ~ *Dr. Stephen J. Nichols*

The Fearsome Foursome - Strength for Today

“For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the Law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death” (Romans 7:5).

Four key terms characterize those who are not in Christ.

In our fallen, cursed world, disasters are commonplace. Fires, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, tornadoes, and other natural disasters happen somewhere every day. Added to those natural disasters are the man-made ones, such as war, acts of terrorism, plane crashes, train wrecks, etc.

But far greater than any of those disasters, and the one from which they all stem, was the entrance of sin into the human race. Sin renders fallen men spiritually dead, cuts them off from fellowship with God, and consigns them to eternal punishment in Hell.

In today's verse Paul introduces four words that describe man's unregenerate state: flesh, sin, law, and death. Those four words are interconnected: the flesh produces sin, which is stimulated by the law, resulting in death. Let's consider each one individually.

The term *flesh* is used two ways in Scripture. It is sometimes used in a physical sense to speak of human existence. John used it to describe Christ's incarnation in John 1:14 and 1 John 4:2. But in its moral sense, “flesh” represents the believer's unredeemed body (Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 2:3). While believers are no longer “in the flesh” (Romans 8:9) as are unbelievers, the flesh is still in us. It is the seat of temptation, the beachhead from which Satan launches his attacks.

Sin (or “sinful passions”) energizes the flesh, which in turn produces further sin. Those “sinful passions,” Paul says, “were aroused by the Law”; they are exposed by the law because fallen man's rebellious nature makes him desire to do what is forbidden. The end result of this downward spiral is “death”—both physical and spiritual.

What a merciful God we serve, who “even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ” (Ephesians 2:5). ~ *Dr. John MacArthur*



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Thoughtfully Reformed - Redemptively Relevant

If you have an October birthday or anniversary that is not posted here or is listed in error, please e-mail Walt at gwlcf10415@gmail.com.

Birthdays and Anniversaries Corner October 2021

Birthdays

*Ezekiel F. (1)
Charlene S. (3)
Ephraim W. (20)*

Anniversaries

Andy and Emily L. (10)

Quote from George Evanke's Farewell Sermon

"How much soever God takes from you, it is less than you owe him; and how little soever he leaves you, it is more than he owes you. Therefore instead of murmuring that your condition is so ill, bless God that it is no worse, saying with Ezra 9:13 *"After all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, seeing that you, our God, have punished us less than our iniquities deserved and have given us such a remnant as this"*.



*West Suffolk Baptist Church
Leadership*

The West Suffolk Epistle is a monthly publication of West Suffolk Baptist Church.

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