

# TABLE TALK

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*...these words... shall be upon your heart; you shall teach them... and talk of them... Deut. 6:6,7*



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## Here I Stand

by  
Rev. Dr. John Erickson

At around noon, 497 years ago this past October thirty-first, Dr. Martin Luther (at 34 years of age, holding Master of Arts and a Doctor of Theology degrees, and having taught now for 9 years) nailed his Ninety-Five Thesis on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Thus began what we now know as the Lutheran Reformation.



Four years later, as a result of all that the Protestant Reformation was bringing about, Luther was summoned by the Emperor, Charles V, to appear before the great government assembly, Diet of Worms, to either renounce or reaffirm the purported errors that church leaders had found in writings related to, or written by him.

At four o'clock on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 17, Luther appeared before the Diet and before the throne of an emperor who was the most powerful to appear in many centuries. Directing his attention to a stack of books on a small table, an official asked Luther if they were his writings; and if he would wish to retract them or if he would hold to them and continue to assert them.

Luther repeated the questions asked of him, then answered the first in the affirmative. He answered the second by asking that he be given some time to think it over in order that he might give an answer without injury to the Word of God and without peril to his soul. He was given 24 hours.

On Thursday, April 18, 1521, he appeared for the second time before the Diet. Although many took notes that day, there is no complete account of exactly what Luther said. Rather what we have are summaries of his comments. Luther spoke first in Latin and then was asked to repeat in German. When finished, he was told he had not addressed the point of the question. The question was whether or not he would recant.

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Luther then said, "If the emperor wants a plain answer, I will give him a plain answer. It is impossible for me to recant unless I am proved wrong by the testimony of Scripture. My conscience is bound to the Word of God. It is neither safe or right to go against one's conscience. Here I stand. God help me. I cannot do otherwise. Amen."



Luther at the Diet of Worms

Luther understood the importance... yes, the absolute necessity of pure doctrine. "In a controversy we must hold to the literal sense of Scripture only, and this is one and the same throughout Scripture" [Walsh edition of Luther's Works, 18, 1447]. "Everything depends on doctrine. Where doctrine is right, everything is right: faith, works, life, suffering, good and evil days, eating, drinking, hungering, thirsting, sleeping, walking, standing, etc. Where doctrine is not right, everything is in vain, everything is lost, and everything utterly condemned: works, life, suffering, fasting, praying, giving alms, wearing cowls, tonsures, and whatever additional holiness is found in the papal church." [Walsh edition of Luther's Works, vol. 17, 1415]

Luther was not the first to dis-

cover that when it comes to matters of faith and the life of the church, the possibility, yes even the certainty of conflict between God's written Word and practices and ideas based on the thinking of men was sure to happen. We see it all through the Old Testament. We see it in the confrontation between the religious leaders and our Lord in His days of ministry. We see it from the very beginning of the

New Testament Church. For example, the reason for Paul's writing his letter to the Galatian Church was false teachers who had worked their way into the church reintroducing Judaic practices into the life of believers in order that they might be, in truth, a part of the "Israel of God."

What is most interesting is the way Paul dealt with this issue. We read in Galatians 1, verse 6

and following: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel -- which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!"

Notice Paul's next words: "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men?" Paul had learned well. He had a good teacher. Our Lord on

one occasion was confronted by some disciples of the Pharisees who addressed Him with these words, "Teacher, we know you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and that you do not care about opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances . . ." (Matt. 22:16).

Jesus condemned the false teachers of his day to their face. "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers! You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?" (Matthew 23:27-33).

The Apostle John spoke much of love. But when it came to doctrine he didn't mess around. "Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. . . If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house [The early Christians held worship services in their homes. (*The Lutheran Study Bible* note on the word 'house')] or give him any greeting. For whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works" (2 Jn. 9-11). One might also reread Peter's and Jude's writings to see how they dealt with the bringing in of false teachings into the church. They were not hesitant to label the teachings as false as well as the bringers of the teachings as

false.

The early church continued in the apostles' doctrine. Doctrinal teaching was the steady, continual diet of the early church (Acts 2:42). When persecution struck... compromise on teaching did not result. Rather the devout scattered, and preached the Word everywhere (Acts 8:4).

Like those early believers, Luther took doctrine seriously. And we must not think that this was easy for him. He struggled in his own mind... his own father questioned him... many others did also: "Have all the theologians and churchmen for a thousand years been wrong and you alone are right?" Luther was not against tradition per se. In fact he loved the wholesome traditions of the church. A Lutheran liturgical service today, even as it was in Luther's day, is very similar to the Catholic mass. Luther believed that the church should retain all of its teachings and traditions *except those that were clearly opposed to the Scriptures*. If they were opposed, they needed to be dealt with now... and with decisiveness!

When Luther saw those claiming to be teaching the right and only way of salvation but who were in fact perverting the true Gospel... he addressed the issue directly, holding nothing back. "Why is it that the pope is so full of heresies and has introduced one after another into the world, until the people at Rome, especially at the pope's court are downright Epicureans and mockers of the Christian faith? The reason is that they fell away from the faith of Christ and relied on works, that is, on their own righteousness. Which of all the other articles was then of any further use to the pope? What good does it do him that his lips highly praise the true God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that he presents the impressive guise of a Christian life? Despite this he is and remains the greatest enemy of Christ. He is and remains the true Antichrist" [Walsh edition of Luther's

Works, 54, 160].

Throughout history there are those who have taken their stand with our Lord and with the Apostles and with men like Luther. Charles Spurgeon was such a man. In 1868, he released his devotional titled Evening by Evening. Included in that volume is a brief devotional for May 29:

"Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho." Joshua 6:26

Since he was cursed who rebuilt Jericho, how much more the man who labours to restore Popery among us. In our fathers' days the gigantic walls of Popery fell by the power of their faith, the perseverance of their efforts, and the blast of their gospel trumpets; and now there are some who would rebuild that accursed system upon its old foundation. O Lord, be pleased to thwart their unrighteous endeavours, and pull down every stone which they build. It should be a serious business with us to be thoroughly purged of every error which may have a tendency to foster the spirit of Popery, and when we have made a clean sweep at home we should seek in every way to oppose its all too rapid spread abroad in the church and in the world. This last can be done in secret by fervent prayer, and in public by decided testimony. We must warn with judicious boldness those who are inclined towards the errors of Rome; we must instruct the young in gospel truth, and tell them of the black doings of Popery in the olden times. We must aid in spreading the light more thoroughly through the land, for priests, like owls, hate daylight. Are we doing all we can for Jesus and the gospel? If not, our negligence plays into the hands of the priestcraft. What are we doing to spread the Bible, which is the Pope's bane and poison? Are we casting abroad good, sound gospel writings? Luther once said, "The devil hates goose quills" and, doubtless, he has good reason, for ready writers, by the Holy Spirit's blessing, have done his kingdom much damage. If the thousands who will read this short word this night will do all they can to hinder the rebuilding of this accursed Jericho, the Lord's glory shall speed among the sons of men. Reader, what can you do? What will you do?

More recently (2010) Jim Reimann,

an ordained minister, Bible teacher, author and editor of a recent edition of Spurgeon's "Evening by Evening" devotional writes:

**Over the last 102 years or so since Spurgeon's day, the Roman Catholic church has somewhat changed its terminology toward a more evangelical-sounding verbiage. But don't be fooled! No pope before or since the time of Martin Luther has renounced Rome's works-based system of salvation. Are there saved Catholics? Yes, but they are saved only by God's grace - and in ignorance of their own church's actual doctrine.**

True believers must continue to fight against any works-based system of salvation, whether it is Roman Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Mormonism, or any other heresy.

(Reimann closes his comments with a challenge to his readers to remember the warning from Paul, mentioned earlier in this article, from Gal.1:1-9).

In the days of the Reformation the Catholics as well as the Reformers were not afraid to label teachings as well as those who promoted those teachings for what they believed they were. Even among the reformers, it wasn't just Luther. Men like Zwingli, Calvin as well as others, were far more concerned with what they believed to be right doctrine than they were the possibility they might hurt the feelings of someone who insisted on holding to what they saw as false or flawed doctrine.

But today... what a contrast. Most often today if a pastor or teacher senses a need to confront a doctrinal issue as he knows he should, generally the first thing on his mind is how the person or persons he confronts might respond. If he is going to keep his 'job' he must consider how he might best keep people happy. But such was not our Lord's or Paul's concern or that of the reformers.

For the apostles and the early Church, as well as for the reformers, doctrine that was based solely on Scripture was something on which to

stand, and to stand firmly with no room for compromise. What others might think about me or those who stand with me, was of little importance. The issue was whether or not I am true to what God has revealed to us of the truth in His Holy Word.

It is well to consider how our Lord dealt with people holding wrong views of things. We might consider the woman caught in the act of adultery (see John 8), or the woman of Samaria He met at Jacob's well (see John 4). In both cases a lack of understanding of God's commandments and will. But He was kind to them and helped them come to an understanding of the truth.

But then secondly, consider His response to those who claimed to be 'in the know' of spiritual things (including Scripture). "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean." Or consider his approach to things when he found inappropriate use made of the Temple (see John 2). In such encounters He did not waste time being 'nice'.

Likewise in the days of the Reformation, when the parties were convinced that a position they held was right... being nice was not a major concern. Be it Roman Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed... people "called a spade a spade."

In many circles today... one's understanding and practice of the Lord's Supper as well as that of Baptism, is considered a "non-essential" to Christian fellowship. In contrast to this, one writer comments that in Luther's day... both "[he] and Zwingli firmly agreed on at least one

thing: one's theology of the Lord's Supper was not minor or secondary, but *essential* to correctly understanding the entire Christian faith." As a result of their convictions, "The debate over the Lord's Supper occupied a primary place in both [their] theologies because of the questions of Christology that arose in the midst of conflict."

If we claim to be of sound doctrine, can I as a Lutheran take a stand any different than that of Luther on the Sacraments? If I am of the Reformed persuasion can I take a position other than that of Zwingli. Has Scripture changed in so far as its teachings on the Sacraments over the past almost 500 years? Does it no longer make any difference what I believe as to what Scripture has to say?

According to the historian just quoted, Luther's and Zwingli's debate continued, and continued in the forefront... because of the implications of one's understanding of Christ Himself that are implicit in one's understanding of the Supper.

Sadly, far too many individuals in churches today - leaders as well as people in the pew - do not seem to see the need for a continual diet of sound doctrine.

We would do well to follow the example of the early church in this... "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, and to the breaking of bread and in prayer" (Acts 2:42). And as to the apostles' teaching (i.e. Scripture) that we "guard what has been entrusted to our care" (1 Tim. 6:20), and "stand firm and hold to the teachings... passed on to [us], whether by word of mouth or by letter" (2 Thess. 2:15).

### **Mark your calendars now -**

The Annual Gathering (Ministerial meeting, Conference and Convention) of the LMS will be held in Chetek, WI ~ June 19-21, 2015

## Heresy Today?

Heresy means an "arbitrary choice, either rejection of doctrines taught by communal authority in the church or a choosing of a doctrine or an interpretation of a doctrine opposed to the authoritative teaching of the church" (Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion).

When it comes to heresy today we quickly turn to churches such as the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, and Unitarians; some would include the Seventh Day Adventists along with church groups that are more commonly called 'cults'. But we need not go to groups such as this... we can find heresy in our own back yard.

*Christianity Today* (Oct. 28, 2014) includes an article, "New Poll Finds Evangelicals' Favorite Heresies." The author says, "Most American evangelicals hold views condemned as heretical by the most important councils of the early church."

In some areas they do quite well - most believe Christ rose from the dead (96%); Salvation is in Christ alone (92%); God is sovereign over people (89%); The Bible is the Word of God (88%).

Most all believe in the Trinity... but 22% say God the Father is more divine than Jesus with 9% more not being sure. 16% say Jesus is God's first creature creation with another 11% not sure. Such beliefs were central to the heretic Arius (250-336) and brought about the first ecumenical church council in Nicaea in 325 with the resultant Nicene Creed.

Another area of deep concern is the understanding of evangelicals today of the Holy Spirit. More than half believe the Holy Spirit is a force and not a personal being. Another 7% were not sure while 42% believe the Spirit is a person.

The divinity issue came into play here also with 9% saying the Holy

Spirit is less divine than the Father and Jesus.

This heresy traces back once again to Arianism and another early Heretical understanding of the Holy Spirit called Pneumatomachianism.

Another area of heretical understanding is seen in today's evangelicals' understanding of our salvation. Who makes the first move? 68% believe a person comes to peace with God by seeking God first and then God acts. 67% said that we have the ability to turn to God on our own. At the same time 54% believe God acts first in our salvation. So which is it?

A monk by the name of Pelagius in the 5th century taught that we can choose God by the strength of our own will. This teaching was seen as heretical and was denounced in 418 at the Council of Carthage.

A little better than half (55%) believe that we have to contribute to our salvation. However, "historic Christian teaching in all branches maintains that whatever role humans play is ultimately inspired by the work of God's Spirit."

The survey also found that in spite of our Lord's giving to Peter - representing the church - the "keys of the kingdom" (Matt. 16:19) as well as the directives for church discipline (Matt. 18:15-20), to say nothing of what we find in other of the New Testament writings, 90% of evangelicals do not believe that the local church has the authority to say a person is not a Christian.

Sadly, other polls have been taken recently demonstrating that heresy is alive and well within the Lutheran family (i.e., denying the authority of Scripture, denying the virgin birth, denying the bodily resurrection of our Lord, works righteousness, Jesus not the only way to the Father and to heaven, the not labeling of sin as sin, among not so few other anti-Scriptural teachings).

## *Imputation and Declaration: The Links to God's Grace in Jesus Christ*

by  
Rev. Mark Dankof

*“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”*

Romans 5:12-19 King James Version (KJV)

*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

2 Cor. 5:21 - King James Bible “Authorized Version” Cambridge Ed.

Before we begin to cover the material in earnest, indulge me in a compulsive practice of mine that always characterized my time as an instructor in San Antonio at the former Texas Bible College. It has characterized my time as a humble pastor in a small and struggling Lutheran parish in the Alamo City when I conduct classes on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, and in every other pastoral call I’ve ever had.

That practice is to recommend some of the best books available in assisting believing pastor and lay person alike in the regular and deeper study of God’s Word. Every one of these books I will briefly mention today has been penned by individuals more gifted than I in this endeavor. I am thankful I can access their work. I am thankful I can commend the repository of Biblical knowledge and insight of these men and women to you.

Consider the following as lifelong resources to add to your individual libraries over the course of time. The first resource is the newly released update of the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (NIDNTTE, ISBN 9780310276197) a 5 volume set of 3,552 pages compiled under the supervision and superintendence of Dr. Moises Silva, the Revision Editor who has blessed Westmont College, Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary over time with his brand of painstaking scholarship in complete submission to the authority of God’s Word and the Gospel of Christ. Download a free primer on the NIDNTTE at <http://www.bit.ly/nidntte>.

Several *one volume introductions* to the *Old and New Testament* will always serve you in good stead. Try *An Old Testament Introduction* (ISBN 9780310263418) by Tremper Longman III of Westmont College, and the late Raymond Dillard of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Add *An Introduction to the New Testa-*

ment (ISBN 9780310238591) by D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, both of whom were professors of mine at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

Since the *Charismatic Renewal movement* is something one will encounter in so many places today, I will commend to everyone the book entitled, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?: 4 Views* (ISBN 9780310201557). The contributors include my old friend and instructor at Westminster Theological Seminary, Dr. Richard Gaffin; Robert L. Saucy; C. Samuel Storms; and Douglas A. Oss. Another of my New Testament instructors from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School is the editor of this critical book, Dr. Wayne Grudem.

Finally, I have slavishly used *charts* as a student and as a pastor trying to plumb the depths of God's Word. *The Zondervan Publishing Company's series of charts* on every conceivable subject is worth your acquisition for the subjects you are drawn to study and examine as the Holy Spirit leads.

Every seminar presentation I make is based on a circle. My reference recommendations are the beginning of the circle which will conclude with where we have now begun.

Let's begin in earnest. My task is to set forth in this brief article the essential aspects of orthodox Lutheran theological and Biblical insight on the person and work of Jesus Christ and the implications of this Biblically revealed Christology for the plan God has established from all eternity for the salvation of the **Israel of God**. By this latter term, I mean all those through the ages who have "confessed with their lips that Jesus is Lord, and believe in their hearts that God has raised Him from the dead" (Romans 10:9).

Put another way, the person and work of Jesus Christ and its centrality in God's provision for salvation, is a fact in history if one accepts the Biblical witness. But what are the implications for each of you?

Do each of you possess eternal life and salvation in the coming Kingdom of God, or not? If not, the objective truth of the Biblical witness that ". . . the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . ." (John 1:14) is for you, an irrelevancy.

Last summer, I made a presentation to the national gathering of the Lutheran Ministerium and Synod-USA entitled, "*The Hands of Time and the Appearance of Logos*." In turn, that address was based on a 1996 talk and subsequent article en-

titled, "*Creeds and Confessions as Liturgy*." The 1996 presentation underscored how the early Confessing Church had to wrestle with all of the *ancient Christological* heresies whose presuppositions and methodology provide the foundation for every modern Christological heresy which threatens the Confessing Church of the present age. I stated then that:

"Among many heretical movements of significance to the early church were *Gnosticism, Marcionism, Montanism, Monarchianism, and Arianism*. Out of orthodoxy's clash with these came an increas-

ingly systematized Christian theological rebuttal and the formulation of affirmative creedal statements.

These statements may be seen not only as the voice of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church staking out its position in challenges past — but as the bequeathed legacy to *today's church, which must turn, paradoxically, to the past, to understand the ideological lineage and connections of ancient enemies to modern antagonists*, as well to recover its own historical memory as the key to the reestablishment of a previously possessed Biblical identity, obscured by compromise with doctrinal relativism and repriminated apostasy."

On heretical movements of Gnosticism, Marcionism, Montanism, Monarchianism, and Arianism.

See page 11



In summarizing these papers of the past two decades quickly, let me simply say that the Biblical witness is clear in the rebuttal of all apostates and heretics in history: *Jesus Christ is True God and True Man. His active and perfect obedience to God's law; His passive obedience to God the Father in willingly suffering death on the Cross at Calvary as the Lamb of God without spot or blemish; and the reality in time and space of his Resurrection from the dead are the sole basis for the salvation and eternal life of all who believe* (John 14:6). For those who believe, the Apostle Paul underscores the truism that “. . . no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (I Corinthians 12:3).

Fair enough. But given the comprehensive sinfulness and rebellion of all of humanity described by Paul in Romans 3: 9-20, how is it that the Holy Spirit and saving faith are bestowed upon some and not others? How are some **declared** righteous by God and not others, since all have an equally and fatally corrosive inability to observe the law perfectly as a prerequisite for earning God's declaration of righteousness (Romans 3: 20)?

Put another way, *the key question is this: How is the righteousness of God in Christ, and the benefit of status as one of God's redeemed through Christ alone for all eternity, transferred or conveyed to each and every comprehensively sinful person in Adam* (Romans 5:12f) who is subsequently able to “confess with their lips that Jesus is Lord, and believe in their hearts that God has raised Him from the dead“? (Romans 10:9).

Enter **the ingredients necessary** for the appropriate reception of believing faith in Christ through the Holy Spirit of God, and the accompanying priceless gift of eternal salvation in Christ, and Christ *alone*: These are the **Imputation of God** to the believer of an *alien righteousness* inherently extrinsic to all of hu-

manity impacted by the sin of Adam. This alien righteousness has its center in the active and passive obedience of Jesus Christ *alone*. The forensic **Declaration of God** that the Israel of God is righteous in Christ follows. *The believer's salvific status before God is the result of this process of Imputation and Declaration*. He or she can contribute not one whit to what has been accomplished by the Son of God on behalf of each and every Saint. In a nutshell, the Protestant Reformational truth that we are justified by God's grace *alone*, through Jesus Christ alone, is absolutely and irrevocably linked to what the New Testament tells us about *Imputation and Declaration*. The Lutheran tradition and the Reformed are in complete accord on this mysterious truth.

As a pastor and theologian with but limited gifts, I never attempt to reinvent the wheel built by our best scholars and exegetes in time. However, God has given me a special gift in enabling me to find, evaluate, and catalog for your use and mine some of the best Biblical scholarship available either now or in the past. When it comes to Imputation and Declaration, I will summarize what I believe is one of the best recent presentations on the subject of the Evangelical—and truly both Lutheran and Reformed—position on this critical subject.

I commend to you The Gospel Coalition's relatively recent book entitled “The Gospel as Center: Renewing Our Faith and Reforming Our Ministry Practices” edited by D. A. Carson and Timothy Keller (Crossway, 2012). For purposes of this seminar conversation today, I ask you to zero in on chapter 9, written by Wheaton College President and Reformed Scholar, Dr. Philip Graham Ryken. Chapter 9 is simply entitled, “Justification.”

My summation of that chapter will hopefully provide your own

roadmap to future Biblical study of the link between Imputation and Declaration, and the Doctrine of Justification understood in the context of God's mysterious and merciful provision for salvation in Jesus Christ. My summation largely coincides with that of evangelical *Armenian* scholar Roger E. Olson, except my evaluation of Ryken is more favorable. Olson is certainly a believer in Christ. But note that his tradition parts with Luther and Calvin on the subject of free will, and with Augustine, Luther, and Calvin on the issue of the *semi-Pelagianism of Jacob Arminius*. I cannot deal with this at great length now. But please do not miss out on the critical differences inherent in these respective interpretations. Here then is the summary of chapter 9:

- 1) Ryken calls Justification the "*Chief Article*." He says "This doctrine holds a place near the center of the gospel." (153)
- 2) Ryken bases most of his exposition of justification on passages from *Romans, especially chapters 3 and 5*. According to him, these Pauline passages and other passages of the New Testament, taken together, propound the truth that in salvation God "does not simply clear a sinner of all charges; he *declares* a sinner to be positively righteous. Justification is *God's legal declaration* that, on the basis of the perfect life and the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, received by faith, a sinner is as righteous as his own beloved Son." (155-156)
- 3) This chapter is, for the most part, a straightforward account of the classical *Lutheran-Reformed* doctrine of justification as *forensic imputation of righteousness*. The emphasis is on *legal metaphors*, on declaration and imputation and not on personal relationship, reconciliation or transformation (of the person being

saved). Salvation is primarily a *change of legal status* in relation to God's judgment. While the emphasis is on legal metaphors and change of legal status, this fact does provide the *foundation for subsequent sanctification* and walking in *personal relationship* with the Biblical God who is a personal being in constant engagement with His chosen.

- 4) Ryken believes the very doctrine of God is at stake in his doctrine of justification. Anyone who thinks God can simply forgive a repentant sinner without imputing Christ's righteousness to him or her (something else he makes clear in the chapter) is impugning the character of God.
- 5) The most fascinating portion of the chapter is the logical symmetry Ryken presents in "*The Righteousness of Justification: A Triple Imputation*." Ryken argues that *Adam's sin* (meaning guilt) is imputed to everyone; *our sin* is imputed to Christ (on the cross) and *Christ's righteousness* is imputed to us in salvation. The key verses he cites for this triple imputation are *Romans 5:12-19* (imputation of Adam's sin to us) and *2 Corinthians 5:21* (our sins imputed to Christ and his righteousness imputed to us).

As I promised at the beginning of this conversation, *we have come full circle at the very end*. Why do I say this? Let me first ask two questions only you can answer for yourself: Are these Biblical truths appropriated *by you* and *for you* in faith? Second, is what has been the understanding of God's mysterious provision for your salvation and mine articulated by the Lutheran and Reformed traditions historically, and in my presentation of the position of Dr. Ryken today, the correct understanding of the Word of God?

This is where your journey only begins, as the Holy Spirit of God

moves and directs you. Get the newly released update of the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* as I directed at the beginning of the circle.

And obtain Strong's Greek and Hebrew concordances. See the words below in Strong's concordances. Use Strong's in conjunction with *NIDNTTE*. And begin a journey with our Biblical texts cited

when we started today, and a lifelong journey with the entirety of God's prophetic and apostolic Word. You will be glad you did.

logizomai - Strong's Number 3049

dikaioi - Strong's Number 1342

dikaioisune - Strong's Number 1343

dike - Strong's Number 1349

Ellogeo - Strong's Number 1677

chashab - Strong's Hebrew #2803

imputare (Latin)

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## Heretical Movements In The Early Church

~ as found listed on page 8 ~

**Gnosticism** - The heretical theory that salvation comes through some kind of knowledge, generally a knowledge claimed by some special elite group. Gnostic theories existed before Christianity, and the Gnostics adapted the Gospels to their own views and for their own purposes, even composing pseudogospels, embodying their own ideas and doctrines. Gnosticism held matter to be evil and hostile to the human spirit and denied the truths of Christian revelation. Although as an organized sect or body of beliefs Gnosticism is extinct, yet Gnostic ideas persist and surface in some form in nearly every major heretical version of the Christian faith.

**Marcionism** - A second-century heresy of Marcion and his followers who rejected the Old Testament and much of the New Testament, except for the Gospel of Luke and ten of Paul's letters. They claimed to teach a more pure gospel after the manner of Paul. It was purely a gospel of love to the exclusion of any law.

**Montanism** - A second-century heretical movement that professed belief in a new "Church of the Spirit". They believed they enjoyed the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit which meant that their fanatically rigorous views concerning morality superseded the authentic revelation of Christ that had been handed down in the Church.

**Monarchianism** - The tragedy of this heresy lies in the fact that its followers really were trying to understand Christ correctly. The name is applied to groups that sought to stress a fundamental biblical and Christian truth, the conviction that God is one, the sole monarch of the universe. It resolves the mystery of the Trinity by rejecting any view which distinguished sharply among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and especially any view that regarded them as distinct, individual Persons in the sense of orthodoxy.

**Arianism** - This heresy arose in the fourth century and denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. It was first advanced by Arius (256-336) who denied that there were three distinct divine persons in God. For Arius there was only one Person, the Father. According to Arian theory, the Son was created ("There was a time when the Son was not"). Christ was thus a son of God, not by nature, but only by grace and adoption. The doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Christ is thus stripped of all meaning. If God did not become man, then the world has not been redeemed and the faith itself eventually dissolves.

Table Talk  
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The LMS-USA is Lutheran Church body describing itself as *Biblical, Confessional, Evangelical, Liturgical and Congregational*. It is a 'Forum' in which there is an on going discussion of theological issues and concerns among clergy and lay alike. The LMS-USA meets annually for a Theological Conference and this publication, besides carrying news of the Ministerium and Synod, functions also as a vehicle for this continuing dialogue.

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