



A CONCLUSION OF THIS STUDY

A SYNOPSIS OF THE CONCLUSION OF THE SYNOD OF 1619

“This is the clear, simple and straightforward explanation of the orthodox doctrine with respect to the five articles in dispute in the Netherlands, as well as the rejection of the errors by which the churches have for some time been disturbed. The Synod judges this explanation and rejection *to be taken from the Word of God* and to be in agreement with the confessions of the Reformed Churches. Hence it clearly appears that some have acted against all truth, fairness, and love in wishing to persuade the public of the following:

- ◆ The doctrine of the Reformed churches concerning predestination and related subjects . . . turns the hearts of men away from all godliness and religion.
- ◆ It makes God the author of sin, an unjust tyrant and hypocrite. . . .
- ◆ It leads to sinful carelessness, since it makes people believe that nothing can prevent the salvation of the elect, no matter how they live . . . And it would not in the least contribute to the salvation of the reprobate, even if they performed all the works of the saints.
- ◆ The same doctrine teaches that God has predestined and created the greatest part of the world for eternal damnation by a mere arbitrary act of His will, without taking into account any sin.
- ◆ In the same way in which election is the source and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and ungodliness.

Therefore, this Synod of Dort adjures, in the Name of the Lord, all who piously call upon our Savior Jesus Christ not to judge the faith of the Reformed churches *from the slander gathered from here and there*. Neither are they to judge from personal statements of some ancient or modern teachers, often quoted in bad faith, or taken out of context and explained contrary to their meaning. But *one ought to judge the faith of the Reformed churches from the public confessions of these churches themselves* and from the present explanation of the orthodox doctrine, confirmed by the unanimous consent of the members of the entire Synod, one and all.

Finally, this Synod exhorts all fellow ministers in the gospel of Christ to conduct themselves in a God-fearing and reverent manner when they deal with this doctrine in schools and churches. In teaching it, both in speaking and writing, they ought to seek the glory of God’s Name, the holiness of life, and the consolation of afflicted souls. Their thinking and speaking about this doctrine should be in agreement with Scripture according to the analogy of faith. And they must refrain from all those expressions which exceed the prescribed limits of the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures and may provide . . . a good opportunity to scoff at the doctrine of the Reformed churches, or even slander it.

May Jesus Christ. . . sanctify us in the truth, lead to the truth those who err, silence the slanderers of the sound doctrine, and equip the faithful ministers of His Word with the Spirit of wisdom and discretion, that everything they say may tend to the glory of God and the building up of those who hear them. Amen.”

RELEVANCE FOR TODAY

We have been amazed that this fight for the truth of what Scripture teaches has been going on for centuries. We do not classify ourselves as Calvinists or extremists or followers of any one man and his teachings, but we search for the clear expression of biblical truth. We do appreciate the fight that John Calvin fought and his God-given desire to search for truth in the Scriptures with determination not to surrender to the popular teachings crippling the churches of his day and today.

After all this time, we continue the conflict because we understand that many within the Reformed faith have submitted themselves and their families to the doctrines of the mega-churches and the “feel good” gospel, teaching that man shares a part in his salvation, denying the glory due to our Savior, and taking glory in their own actions towards salvation.

The basis of our faith and understanding is God’s gift to us, unworthy as we are, but we are determined to defend the truth of God’s Word through continual study and communion with others of like mind whom God has drawn together. After this study, some questions remain which require “Having an Answer:”

- ◆ Why is the fight for truth concerning the doctrines of the Bible so important to pursue?
- ◆ To those who fight for truth as John Calvin did, are they not accused of stirring dissension within the church? What two scripture verses help us discern what to do with this accusation?
- ◆ Are we not saved by God’s grace and not by our own understanding?
- ◆ What are our concerns regarding the importance of being “equally yoked?”
- ◆ Does God really need the “foolishness of man’s preaching” to keep the truth of His word in the church? Why should we be at peace even though we see the gospel continue to be watered down in the church today?