**Revelation 14:6-7**

Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. **7** And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

**“An Eternal Gospel”**

Grace to you and peace from Him, “who is and who was and who is to come,” Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. To celebrate the Reformation is not about what is new, but what has always been there. St. John the apostle made it clear, “Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people.” The word “Gospel” means good news. There were plenty of gospels floating around at the time of the Reformation. Good news for some was in how the Holy Roman Empire was losing its power. Others witnessed the printing press as a technology taking off that none could ignore. Discovery of the new world was also opening doors never thought possible for people. Even the sci*e*ntist, Nicolaus Copernicus, gave exciting news about the universe with the earth revolving around the sun.

Yet, all this good news was a passing fad. There is no longer a Holy Roman Empire to fear. The printing press fades behind the personal computer. A new world is nothing new, since we can see it all on Google maps. Even the complex theory of Copernicus is now a basic fact learned in elementary school. None of these things was ever truly the Gospel. What the Lord worked through Martin Luther and the Reformation set free for all to hear the eternal Gospel. Salvation God gives is by grace through faith by what Jesus alone has won for us. As the angel directly overhead said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.” The eternal Gospel remains to turn us to God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit above all things.

We turn to fear God for His forgiveness is true. In the book of Revelation, St. John portrays the Devil as a dragon who summons two beasts arising out of the sea and earth. Their presence incites a fear among the people to do what they want. Fear is a powerful force in this world. Luther saw this darkness at work in both the church and state. It came even with the impending threat of the Ottoman Empire. However, the fear of God was to set him free in Jesus to fear neither sin, death, nor the powers of the Devil. Obeying the First Commandment took precedence over all other problems. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding” (Psalms 111:10). This was far from being afraid of God. Rather to fear God was to find refuge in Him against all other false gods.

Where the Devil and all who follow him over the centuries use fear to control the ways of men. God enters the lives of people not by His almighty power, but as the one who comes with forgiveness. Fear goes from being afraid to a firm trust in God. Those who fear the hour of God’s judgment have the good news that flies directly overhead. St. John tells us this gracious invitation, “Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). The Father has provided His Son as the sacrifice. All have received a verdict of “not guilty” to believe in God. Jesus says, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” The reformation not only needed heroes using their God given gifts, but faith that relied on God’s Word. That alone lets us fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

We turn to glorify God for His Name saves. False glory flows out from the fall of our first parents Adam and Eve. They fell for the Devil’s lie that they would become like God. Glorifying oneself denies God alone what He deserves. Left to self-man naturally even makes up false gods for our comfort. St. Paul tells us, “For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things” (Romans 1:21-23). Luther saw this kind of corruption with relics, titles, and prayers to the saints. They held up the works of men over God. We face the same threat in our time. It is to worship what we can do, rather than what God has done and will do by the promise of His Word.  
 Baptism into the Name of the Triune God has put His glory upon our lives. Nothing compares with this work of Jesus that saves. A Lutheran Pastor in Germany reflects for us on what this means while baptizing Muslims converts. He states, “It was a poignant moment because many of them had Christian ancestors who had to renounce their Christianity and confess Islam on fear of death centuries ago. Now, the Persian Christians who come to Leipzig and are baptized reverse that confession — not under fear of death, but out of faith and in joy.”[[1]](#footnote-1) A good confession from baptism into Christ is glorious. None needs to shy away from Him. The promise holds true, “I will speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame” (Psalmist 119:46). There is no shame to glorify God in Christ. He is the Judge of all. You can dismiss this by hiding behind false glories of men or your works hoping they stand. The other answer is to let the glory belong to God for the hour of His judgment has fallen upon Christ for your sake.

We turn to worship God for His gifts give us Jesus. Throughout the Old Testament idolatry was always the problem with the people of Israel. It remains the same when you look around today. We live in a land with many gods, many beliefs, and many opinions of man that push the true God out of the picture. Even in the visible church, worship has now become an indifferent matter. It is a creation set to the taste of what people crave. Yet, Luther rolls over in his grave for he tells us what it means to worship God. None should despise God’s Word and gladly hear and learn it. Preference and appeal easily lead to worshiping the worship of man and not the Word of what God says. In other words, it is to trade enteral truths for fashionable trends.

God denies the whims of man to worship Him from what He gives. The Father gave His Son out of love for a sinful world. Jesus gave Himself over to death out of love to save the lost. Peter filled with the Holy Spirit gave the witness, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). We worship God in His Son. It is to listen to His Word and receive what He gives in the sacraments. This is justification, rightness before God by what God does for us. The Lutheran Fathers want the eternal Gospel to reign saying, “The righteousness of the Law is the divine service that offers to God our merits. God wants to be worshiped through faith so that we receive from Him those things He promises and offers” (Concordia 107:49). What the Father put forward in His Son is a gift. What Jesus puts forward is to depend upon the gifts He gives. What true worship puts forward is the gift of faith in these promises that bears good fruit for others in life.

The eternal Gospel remains to turn us to God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit above all things. No other redeeming good news would last from the Reformation than to repent and worship God alone. St. John the Apostle gives this hope for the church of all times that suffers at the hands of sinners and the devil’s power. Even as our culture attempts to drag down the Church, the eternal Gospel still flies overhead with deliverance set upon Christ. God keep us in the true faith as promised by His Word and preserve this preaching in our land until He comes in glory to judge both the living and the dead. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. http://blogs.lcms.org/2014/former-muslims-baptized#.VElRZRYQmCo.facebook [↑](#footnote-ref-1)