



# REFORMED

## — P A V I L I O N —

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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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## MEDITATION

And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

—Exodus 7:8–13

**N**ow the battle is joined.  
Moses versus the mighty Pharaoh.  
Aaron versus the enchanting magicians.  
God versus the gods.

Yes, now the battle is joined. But it is no contest. Though Pharaoh and Pharaoh's magicians and Pharaoh's gods do not know it yet, they have been defeated before they have even begun. For God has raised up the mighty Pharaoh for the very purpose of revealing his power against him. The mighty civilization of Egypt—with all its splendor and wonder, with all its mystery and enchantment, with all its gods and magicians, with all its chariots and horsemen—exists for the one purpose of being the foil against which Jehovah will display his absolute sovereignty. The mightiest man who has ever lived—Pharaoh—and the most splendid trappings of power that have ever gleamed upon the earth—the kingdom of Egypt and all its wonders—are no match for Jehovah, the shepherd of Israel.

Let us stand in Pharaoh's court and watch the contest, which is no contest, unfold.

Over there is the mighty Pharaoh. His palace is splendid. His kingdom is flourishing. He fears nothing.

Surrounding Pharaoh are his magicians and sorcerers. They are the wisest men in the world. They know secrets that no other men have

learned. They wield power that no other men understand. Two of the magicians are foremost: Jannes and Jambres (II Tim. 3:8).

And over there stand Moses and Aaron. Moses stands as God before Pharaoh, and Aaron stands as his prophet. Moses and Aaron speak God's word to Pharaoh: "Let my people go."

Pharaoh does not listen. His ears are stopped. His heart is hard. He demands a miracle of Moses and Aaron before he will listen to the Hebrews' God.

Moses tells Aaron to cast his rod upon the ground before Pharaoh. Aaron does so, and the rod of God's power immediately becomes a serpent. Pharaoh is unmoved. He calls his wise men to do the same. All the sorcerers to a man, led by Jannes and Jambres, withstand Moses and throw down their rods, all of which likewise become serpents. The ground of Pharaoh's court is crawling with snakes. But Aaron's serpent darts through the tangle and swallows up all the magicians' serpents until there is nothing left but Aaron's rod.

All the events in Pharaoh's court serve to reveal the awesome might of Jehovah over against Pharaoh. Everything that takes place happens by the sovereign control of the eternal I AM. Aaron's rod becomes a serpent because God makes it a serpent. The magicians' rods become serpents because God loans them the

power of their enchantments for the sake of hardening Pharaoh's heart. Aaron's rod swallows up the magicians' rods because the power is God's and not the magicians'. And Pharaoh remains unmoved because God "hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said" (Ex. 7:13).

Behold the power of God to harden and destroy his enemies! The contest is no contest! The battle has been won before it even begins!

Why? Because all these things happen according to the eternal will and good pleasure of Jehovah. And the eternal will and good pleasure of Jehovah is that he might make his wrath and power known in the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.

But what of Israel? Ah, God has an eternal decree of his good pleasure for them as well. Presently a spotless passover lamb will be slain, and its blood will cover God's church. And presently the Red Sea will be opened, in which the church in the wilderness will be baptized and through which the church in the wilderness will enter glory. That too is God's power displayed, as he takes the unworthy and makes them his own people.

All that glorious gospel is unfolded in the sands of Egypt. The battle is joined. And in Christ we are more than conquerors through him that loved us!

—AL



## REFORMATION DAY LECTURE

# THE GOOD LAW & THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL

OCTOBER 31, 2023  
7:30PM

The distinction between the law and the gospel is the most important distinction in the Christian faith.

Martin Luther: "Distinguishing between the law and the gospel is the highest art in Christendom, one who every person who values the name Christian ought to recognize, know, and possess."

The distinction between the law and the gospel is of great comfort for the child of God. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

For these reasons, the distinction between the law and the gospel is the most heavily assaulted doctrine in the Christian faith. This Reformation Day, join us for an explanation and defense of the great distinction between God's good law and God's glorious gospel.

### HOST

Remnant Reformed  
Church

### SPEAKER

Rev. Andrew Lanning

### FORMAT

Lecture followed by  
Q&A and refreshments

### VENUE

The Pinnacle Center, 3330 Highland Drive, Hudsonville, MI 49426

Questions can be submitted either before or after the lecture via the [Contact](#) page of our website

[www.remnantreformedchurch.org](http://www.remnantreformedchurch.org)

## Article XXVIII. The Fallen King and His Kingdom (continued)

**T**he problem that occupies our attention must be very clearly understood.

There are two peoples in this world, and exactly in what regard they are two, fundamentally different peoples, must be perfectly clear.

They are not two separate races from a natural point of view, so that in every sense they appear in this dispensation as radically different from each other. They do not form two separate organisms, born from separate parents and living in two different worlds. They do not reveal radically different traits of character, neither do they differ in respect of powers and talents. They seem to be alike in body and soul, reveal in general the same power of intellect as well as the same life of soul and body. It is not so that the one race possesses all the natural talents and good gifts of God while the other people are devoid of all that man originally possessed. From a natural point of view they are, in general, the same.

Cain and Abel are brothers. They are born of the same parents, they belong to the same human race, manifest the same human talents and powers, enjoy the same blessings and live in the same world. It is not thus, that from the start it becomes very evident that the curse of God rests upon Cain in every sense, while the grace and blessing of God are with Abel. Cain is not physically weak and showing in his body the curse of sin, weak and suffering, while Abel is the strong and robust fellow, not subject to suffering and showing no effects of sin whatsoever. Cain is not an imbecile, devoid of intellectual power and lacking power of will, while Abel is the man of intellectual and moral strength. On the contrary,

from a natural point of view Cain is perhaps the abler man of the two. He sets himself the task of developing the world, of wrestling from the ground what is beneficial to man and his life in the world, he is the man that subdues the world. He is the man that builds cities and becomes mighty in the world. But Abel from the start chooses the far less important occupation of a shepherd, requiring far less intellectual and physical ability and offering practically no opportunity for advancement and development. The greater ability is with the seed of the serpent in this instance. And not only is this true of Cain and Abel, but also of the descendants of Cain and Seth respectively, in whom the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman are evidently perpetuated for some time. Not in the genealogical records of Seth do we find the names of the great and powerful, of the giants of industry, inventors and artists but in those of Cain. The names of Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-Cain are forevermore connected with the first development of the human race. And that these descendants of Cain actually soon became powerful lords in the world, that demanded respect because of their bold tyranny is evident from the proud speech of Lamech to his two wives, which undoubtedly contains far more than mere empty boast. On the other hand, in the line of Seth we meet with no such remarkable characters from a natural point of view. The only two of whom something is recorded, besides that they were born, begot children and died, are Enoch and Lamech, and in both instances we receive the impression that they were rather hard pressed, rather than that they belonged to the great of the world. Enoch



was a preacher. Already in that early period he staked all his hope on the coming of the Lord for judgment. Jude 14, 15. And Lamech, at the occasion of the birth of Noah, prophetically expresses his longing for comfort and rest and it is he who remembers that the earth is cursed by the Lord. If any outward, natural distinction becomes plain between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent in this period it is rather that the latter reveal more power of body and mind, from the very start manifest more ability and initiative to subdue the world than the former.

Neither, let it be clearly understood, is the difference between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent a moral difference merely. Again we would be disappointed if from this point of view we would compare the two. Cain is morally not a bad man, and never should we present the case in Sunday-school or Day-school or Catechism-class as if the killing of Abel must be explained from his bad moral character. We would miss the point. I rather imagine that Cain, if he lived today might very well be found in respectable company. He was even a religious man. Let us make no mistake about him. He did not deny the existence of God. He did not refuse to serve Him. On the contrary, he wanted to do something for the Lord. He brought his offering just as well as Abel did, although there was a principle difference between the two sacrifices that is significant. But surely, it was no mere moral difference that existed between the brothers. The same is true of many bible-characters of later date. If from a moral point of view you study the history of Abraham and Abimelech you will find that Abraham is the loser. If you draw a comparison between Esau and Jacob, you will come to the conclusion that from a merely moral point of view Esau is far the better man. Jacob is a small, selfish, unscrupulous sort of fellow, cunning and deceitful. You never trust him. He puts a man on his guard by his very looks. But Esau is the open-minded, honest, big fellow of the woods. It's a pleasure to meet him. On him you can depend. And thus you might multiply examples. It is not a question of morality.

But the fundamental difference is a spiritual one. The seed of the devil are principally like their spiritual father and do his will. Not that Cain is a tiller of the ground and a builder of cities is his wickedness. Not that his descendants are raisers of cattle and makers of tents, workers in brass and iron and inventors of musical instruments is their sin. Nothing is as such sinful. This general principle we must keep clearly before our mind. It has sometimes been presented as if the prevalent view among our people were that industry and commerce, science and art, that in fact the different spheres of life were sinful and evil in themselves. But surely, no truly conscious Calvinist will defend that view. But this is the fact, that whatever splendid talents the seed of the serpent may still possess, whatever power they may develop, however beautifully and ably they may bring to light the hidden powers of creation, yea, whatever moral character they may manifest, spiritually they do nothing good and in every sphere of life they principally serve their spiritual father, the serpent, after all. On the other hand, the seed of the woman is characterized by the fact that they spiritually belong to the Great Seed that was still to come in the distant future, are in Him, partakers of His life. This spiritual difference manifests itself very plainly. Abel possessed the faith, Cain did not. And this spiritual difference becomes manifest, too, in their respective offering. For, evidently, it is not true, that there was merely a spiritual difference while the offering of each was identically the same as that of the other, but they brought two different offerings. Abel brought a bloody offering, and thereby, no doubt confessed his sin and the need of atonement in principle; while Cain simply brought an offering of the fruit of the ground, laughed at the story of sin and righteousness, and wanted to serve God on a purely natural basis. Abel had received grace, Cain did not. And it was because Cain could not stand the religion of Abel, could not tolerate his testimony which he received of the Lord, that he killed him. Abel is the first martyr. The same difference is manifest in the descendants of Cain and those of Seth. Enoch

already speaks of the ungodliness of the former, and of whomever may have mingled themselves with them at that time, testifying against their wickedness in powerful language. But it is in the line of Seth that we read: “then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.” It is in that line we meet men that walk with God like Enoch and Noah, men that defend the glory of God’s name, and it is there that the curse of God because of sin is remembered and felt.

Two peoples, then, there are, not naturally, or morally, but spiritually different. And do not say, that this spiritual difference is only a gradual one or relative, for this is not true. Spiritually the difference is absolute.

On the one side the seed of the serpent, on the other side the seed of the woman.

On the one side the children of evil, on the other the children of grace.

On the one side Satan’s people, on the other God’s people.

On the one side the reprobate, on the other the elect.

But, once more, these two live in the same world, have naturally the same life, the same talents and powers, enjoy the same privileges and gifts, receive apparently the same blessings.

And again the question arises: how is this possible? How must this be explained?

Must we accept that there are two kinds of grace, one kind particularly for God’s people, for the elect, for the seed of the woman, and another for all men in general?

Is there, besides the principle of sin and of what is called particular grace, still a third principle or power operating in the world, a second kind of grace, creating a sphere where the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman meet on common ground and are really one?

As I see it, this is the problem.

Stating it concisely it implies two questions:

1. Objectively speaking: can God ever, for time or eternity, in any manner be graciously inclined, assume an attitude of favor and love over against the naked sinner, outside of Christ Jesus? If so, on what basis? If not, how can we speak of common grace?

2. Subjectively considered: is there in the heart of the natural man any receptivity for the grace of God in the true sense of the word, so that to him the outward privileges and blessings become real blessings of grace? If so, where does this receptivity find its origin? If not, how can even these common privileges be blessings of grace to the wicked?

—Holland, Mich.

