



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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And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brasen rings in the four corners thereof. And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.

—Exodus 27:1–8 (See also 38:1–7.)

The Altar of Burnt Offering

The altar of burnt offering was the fifth article of furniture in the tabernacle. It was by far the largest piece of furniture, measuring seven and a half feet square and standing four and a half feet high. It was made of the same durable shittim wood as the ark, the table of shewbread, and the altar of incense. However, whereas those were all covered with gold, the altar of burnt offering was overlaid with brass.

The altar of burnt offering had a large horn at each of its four corners. Each was used as a kind of hitching post where animals to be sacrificed were tied. “God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar” (Ps. 118:27).

The significance of the altar is found in the multitude of animal sacrifices that were offered to God upon it. Bulls, sheep, and goats were slain by the thousands year after year. Their blood was shed in the courtyard, and their bodies were laid upon a brass grate that was fitted in the altar. Underneath the grate were fiery, burning coals (Lev. 16:12), the heat of which would roast the meat of the victims. Much of the meat of the sacrifices went to the priests

and Levites for their food. In addition to all the sacrifices during the feasts and all the sacrifices that the people brought, there were also the daily morning and evening sacrifices of lambs, which were known as the continual burnt offering (Ex. 29:38–42).

The altar of burnt offering was the most prominent, visible, aromatic, audible article of furniture in the tabernacle. It was located in the court of the tabernacle, near the curtain that served as the entrance to the court. As one entered the court, the altar of burnt offering would be immediately in front of him. All around the altar would be animals in various stages of being sacrificed. The noise of the animals would fill the air, along with the sizzle and aroma of their cooking flesh. The altar of burnt offering could not be missed! The altar of burnt offering must not be missed! The only way to get to the tabernacle, where Jehovah dwelled, was to go past this bloody, burning altar. It would have left the strongest impression upon the Israelite of old that the only way to God’s dwelling was through this brazen gateway of fire and blood and death.

Oh yes, the altar of burnt offering must not be missed! For the altar was a symbol of the

burning wrath of God against sin. To look through the grate of the altar to the bed of fire-wreathed coals beneath was to look into hell, where the curse of God roasts the wicked. How could man ever come to God's house through such a deadly way as this?

Ah, but there is something else not to be missed. The animals being burned upon the altar were substitutes! Israelites were not being burned upon the altar but bulls and goats and

calves and sheep. Not that the animals could ever be true substitutes for sinful Israelite men and women. But the animals pointed to the true substitute! Our Lord Jesus Christ was offered in our place, and he made atonement by his own blood that he might enter into God's house and bring us with him. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12).

—AL



REFORMATION DAY LECTURE

THE MATERIAL PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2025 | 7:00PM

What was the great sixteenth-century Reformation of the church about?

Well, it was about a great many things.

- It was about popes and penance.
- It was about corruption and conscience.
- It was about monks and masses.
- It was about the truth and the lie, Christ and antichrist, righteousness and unrighteousness.
- And much more besides.

Yes, but what was the Reformation about? What was it essentially about? What was the heart and the kernel of the Reformation? What was the issue that lay at the root of all that was said and done in the great Reformation of the church? What, in short, was the Reformation about?

Ah, therein lies the gospel. For the Reformation was about justification by faith alone.

We call the doctrine of justification by faith alone the material principle of the Reformation. That is, justification was the doctrine, the essence, the heart, the kernel, the issue—the material—of the entire Reformation.

And what marvelous material is justification by faith alone! For it is the gospel of our salvation in Jesus Christ alone.

This Reformation Day, we would be delighted if you would join us to hear about and rejoice in the wonderful gospel of justification by faith alone, the material principle of the Reformation.

HOST

**Remnant Reformed
Church**

SPEAKER

Rev. Andrew Lanning

FORMAT

**Lecture followed by
Q&A and refreshments**

VENUE

Pavilion Christian School, 9181 Kenowa Ave. SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49534

lawgospel.com

Article CXXXII: The New King and His Kingdom: The Children of the Promise (continued)

“The elder shall serve the younger.”—Rom. 9:12

The first point of importance in the history of Jacob and Esau to which we called the attention last week was that they were brothers, and that twin brothers.

From a natural point of view they were as closely related, as intimately connected as possible.

They were brothers.

They were children of the same father and mother.

They were covenant twins.

Together, on the same day, they saw the light of the world. Together, on the same day, they received the sign of the covenant, the seal of the righteousness which is by faith. The same lifeblood flows in their veins. They are of the same flesh and blood.

Surely, if the children of the flesh are also children of the promise without exception, these twins cannot be separated. There is nothing in these boys that constitutes a ground, a natural ground why the one should be accepted and the other rejected.

Yet, it is of these two that Scripture informs us how God through his sovereign purpose of election makes separation between the one and the other. “Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.”

But there is more.

Significant is, too, that Esau, the hated one, is the first-born. It was especially with priority in birth that the great covenant blessing, the promise of Abraham, was connected. The first-born had the birthright, the right to the blessing.

In his line the promise made to Abraham, that he should be heir of the world and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed, was to be realized. And that right of the first-born was Esau's. God so ordered all things that not Jacob, but Esau was the first-born of the twins.

Of course, for the Arminian there is no problem here at all. To him all appears very simple and the whole history is perfectly clear. To him no question occurs as to why Esau and not Jacob had to be the first-born. He explains it all from the point of view of God's foreknowledge. God hated Esau because he knew what Esau would do. He knew that Esau would be the first-born, and that as such he would have the right to the covenant blessing. He knew that Esau would be carnally minded and that he would despise the right he possessed, that he would trample under foot the blessing of grace and do despite unto the Spirit of God. God knew that Esau would be a fornicator. He knew from all eternity that Esau would attach so little significance to the blessing of the covenant that he would sell his right to it for a mess of pottage. It was a matter of eternal prescience. And because of this God hated Esau. He hated Esau, truly, from eternity. But only because he knew what Esau would be and do after he grew up. The whole history seems very simple. It is all a matter of the foreknowledge of God pure and simple.

It may be remarked in objection to this view, in the first place, that it by no means explains what it pretends to make clear. The purpose, the motive of this interpretation is, of course, to avoid the hard doctrine of reprobation as an element of God's free and sovereign decree. But fact is that it only makes matters worse. Fact is

that Esau would never have manifested himself as so great a sinner as he did now if he had not been the first-born. If Jacob had been born first, Esau would never have had the opportunity to despise the birthright. He would never have become the fornicator. Now, God knew that Esau would despise the birthright? And he also knew that Jacob was better fitted to receive that right, and that he would appreciate it and serve the Lord? Then the question arises: Why did God allow Esau to be the first-born if he knew all this? He surely had it in his power to give the right of the first-born to Jacob instead of to Esau. Why, then, in view of the fact that God knew what Esau would do with the birthright in case he received it did he give it to him? This question cannot be avoided. The question which the Arminian means to avoid presses itself upon us with all the greater force from his point of view. He does not solve the problem.

But, as we remarked last week, this viewpoint that makes an attempt to explain election and reprobation from God's foreknowledge is not ours, is not the Reformed. All people of Reformed persuasion have always united to reject this view, and to maintain that God's love of Jacob and God's hatred of Esau was first, was absolutely free and sovereign. Although reprobation, as a free and sovereign act of God's will, is not to be explained in the same sense as election; although, in other words, God's will in reprobation is different from his will in election; this difference does not concern God's absolute freedom or the independence of his will. If, in the case of Esau and Jacob, the character and life of the brothers as the object of the foreknowledge of God had been the determining factor in God's reprobation and election, we would expect that Esau would have been the object of God's love, not Jacob. From a natural point of view Esau was the more appealing character. He was the child of the woods, the robust, loyal, open-hearted, broad-minded hunter. His appearance would fill one with confidence, over against Jacob, whose shrewd appearance put one on his guard against him. Esau would be the hero in many a novel of

our day. Esau was undeceiving, Jacob was not. Taking the boys as they were, apart from the grace of God, Esau was undoubtedly the better man. But now it is different. God's purpose of election is absolutely free and independent. It is not determined, but determining. And it is only from that point of view that we can explain Scripture when it says: "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." But, then, the question cannot very well be repressed: Why did God cause Esau to be the first-born? He started the one he hated, not the one he loved, on life's path with the right of the first-birth. Esau, not Jacob, was granted the right to the covenant blessing. Had Esau not received that right, never would he have become so great a sinner as he now actually became. Or, to express ourselves more correctly, the corrupt nature, the fornicator's nature of Esau would never have appeared as clearly and fully as it did now. Now that he received that right he had the opportunity to become a fornicator. Now he could trample the blessing of God's covenant under foot. Now he became the utterly reprobate and was rejected.

The question is: Why?

With a view to Jacob being the second-born the question is not difficult to answer. It was to become perfectly manifest that God's grace was free. "That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." The deepest ground of Jacob's acceptance by God lay only in God's free purpose of election. Jacob also had to understand this. That is why ultimately he must learn that all his attempts to acquire the covenant blessing by an arm of flesh are vain. Esau proves the stronger. To hold Esau's heel does not help Jacob. The God of Abraham must give him the blessing. But, lest Jacob might boast that the covenant blessing was granted him as the first-born, he is born second. He is born without that right. That it might become perfectly manifest that the purpose of election was free. There is no difficulty here.

But how about Esau? Was there no purpose with respect to Esau in the fact that he became

the first-born and thus possessed by right of nature the birthright blessing?

There certainly was.

Did you never read what Paul says in Rom. 7:13 about the effect of the good law upon the flesh? Listen. “Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good; that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful.” The meaning of this passage is plain. The law is good and holy and righteous. But the flesh is corrupt. And when sinful nature comes into contact with the law, it reveals itself in all its corruption. The same is true of Esau.

He was carnal. And receiving the birthright as a carnal man, the corruption of his carnal nature became perfectly evident when he trampled it under foot—sold it for a mess of pottage.

Was, then, God to blame for Esau’s sin? God forbid. Was the birthright to blame for Esau’s becoming a fornicator? No. The birthright was good. Just as the law is holy and good and righteous, so the birthright Esau received was good. But Esau was corrupt, carnal, sold under sin. And in his case sin showed itself to be exceeding sinful through his rejection of the birthright.

Thus Esau stands condemned, and God is justified.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

