



# 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 the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long for one side: and the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets shall be of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. And likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings of an hundred cubits long, and his twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. And for the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits: their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward shall be fifty cubits. The hangings of one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. And on the other side shall be hangings fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four. All the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver; their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass. The length of the court shall be an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of brass.

—Exodus 27:9–19 (See also 38:9–20.)

### The Courts of the Lord

**H**ow lovely the courtyard of the tabernacle would be! Lovely in appearance, certainly. Surrounding the main tabernacle on all sides would be pillars of acacia wood seven and a half feet high. But whereas the pillars in the tabernacle would be overlaid with gold, the pillars of the court would be left uncovered, so that the rich brown acacia wood would be visible. The pillars would be set in brass bases (“sockets”), would be banded with silver (“fillets”), would have silver hooks, and would have brass pins and pegs to make all the attachments. Hanging between the pillars would be curtains of fine twined linen. But whereas the curtains of the tabernacle were a variety of colors, the curtains of the courtyard would be pure white. The curtain that served as the doorway into the court would be the same blue, purple, and scarlet as the main tabernacle building.

How impressive the tabernacle must have appeared as one approached it: the white curtains

of the courtyard rippling in the desert wind; the dark acacia wood of the pillars highlighting its silver and brass accents; and, towering up from inside the courtyard, the colorful fabrics of the tabernacle itself.

Yes, the courtyard of the tabernacle would be lovely in appearance. But far more lovely was its meaning. For the courtyard was where the Israelite would commune with his God. Only the priests and Levites would be permitted to enter the tabernacle proper, but every Israelite could visit the court. There in the court the Israelite would stand in the presence of his God, who would dwell among his people in the tabernacle. The courtyard would be precious to the Israelite as the covenant meeting place between God and his people. The man who entered the courts of the Lord dwelled with the Lord his God.

“Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts” (Ps. 65:4). “My soul longeth,

yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God” (84:2). “For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness” (v. 10). “Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God” (92:13). “Bring an offering, and come into his courts” (96:8). “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name” (100:4). “Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God, praise the LORD; for the LORD

is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant” (135:2–3).

And behold our savior, who has opened the courts of the Lord’s house to us through his blood and who brings us with him into the courts of the Lord to dwell with and praise our God.

I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the LORD’s house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD. (Ps. 116:17–19)

—AL

## EDITORIAL

### God of God: Nicea’s Septendecicentennial (8)

#### Homoousios

The next group to propose a confession for the Council of Nicea to adopt was the group led by Eusebius of Caesarea. Eusebius was the most renowned scholar present at Nicea, and his party was by far the majority. After the council had rejected Eusebius of Nicomedia and his Arian confession, it was time for Eusebius of Caesarea to propose his compromise position. He had come to Nicea with an old Palestinian confession that the Arians were willing to sign. Emperor Constantine had also seen this confession ahead of time and had approved of it.

What made the Palestinian confession so appealing was that it used biblical language to describe the divinity of Christ. Drawing on the heavenly language of the Holy Spirit in scripture, the Palestinian creed confessed,

We believe in one God the Father  
Almighty,  
Maker of all things visible and invisible;  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,

the Word of God,  
God of God,  
Light of Light,  
Life of Life,  
the only–begotten Son,  
the first–born of every creature,  
begotten of God the Father before all ages,  
by whom also all things were made;  
who for our salvation was made flesh and  
made his home among men;  
and suffered;  
and rose on the third day;  
and ascended to the Father;  
and will come again in glory, to judge the  
quick and the dead.  
[We believe] also in one Holy Ghost.<sup>1</sup>

Eusebius of Caesarea and his majority party had come to Nicea to forge a compromise that would bring peace between Arius and Alexander. They had hoped that their Palestinian confession would be the means by which such a peace

<sup>1</sup> Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, rev. David S. Schaff, *The Greek and Latin Creeds with Translations* (repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2007), 29–30.

would be forged. And what a confession it is! The doctrine of the Palestinian confession is pure and true. Its language is lovely and, in places, sublime. “Who for our salvation was made flesh and made his home among men.” The heart of the believer thrills with joy to hear it!

But a compromise with Arius—even using such a lovely creed as the Palestinian confession—would have been the death of the Christian faith. For Arius denied that Jesus is God. If the Palestinian confession, even for all its true language, could be interpreted by the church to mean that Jesus was only a god of God, then the Christian faith would fall. Jesus is God, or there is no Jesus. Jesus is God, or there is no salvation. Jesus is God, or there is no church. There must be no compromise with Arius! And the Lord Jesus Christ himself would see to it. Whereas men had come to Nicea with their olive branches, Christ had come to Nicea with his sword. The exalted Christ would suffer no peace with Belial. By his word and Spirit, he saw to it that the council revolted against Arianism. By the time Eusebius of Caesarea proposed his confession, the council was thoroughly turned against the heresy of Arianism.

The mood of the majority had now changed. Earlier they hoped to deal with the issues at stake through negotiation and compromise, without condemning any doctrine. Now they were convinced that they had to reject Arianism in the clearest way possible.<sup>2</sup>

When the Arians at Nicea said that they could sign the Palestinian confession, the other delegates were rightly suspicious that the confession was not strong enough on the point at issue. The Palestinian confession was a good start, but the council insisted on making it even clearer on Jesus’ divinity. In fact, the delegates insisted that it be so clear that the Arians would not be able to sign it at all.

But how could the Council of Nicea make such a strong confession even stronger? The Arians, after all, were willing to say so many good and true things about Jesus. The Arians could wax eloquent about Jesus’ supreme excellence over every creature. The Arians could write copiously about Jesus’ being the *Logos*, that is, the Word. The Arians said often that Jesus is God, as long as they were allowed to mean *god*. What could Nicea say about Jesus that the Arians would not, could not, agree to?

Ah, but there was something that the Arians could not agree to. There was a particular word—just a word!—that the Arians “hated and declared to be unscriptural, Sabellian, and materialistic.”<sup>3</sup> That little word, in Greek, was *homoousios*. That word means *same (homo) essence (ousios)*. It expresses the truth that Jesus’ divine nature is of the very same essence as the Father’s. What is the essence of the Father? The Father is divine! The Father is God! And Jesus is *homoousios*. As the Father is divine, so Jesus is divine. As the Father is God, so Jesus is God.

*Homoousios*. This was the one word the Council of Nicea needed to definitively exclude Arianism. And the Lord gave this word to his church in a somewhat surprising way. It was Emperor Constantine who suggested that it be added to the Palestinian confession. Constantine, who had hoped for compromise. Constantine, who had as one of his main goals that the church institute be united and not fractured, for the sake of the political unity of his empire. This Constantine the Lord used to see to it that the word *homoousios* be included in the Nicene Creed.

Constantine suggested that the word *homoousios*...be included in the creed. (Did Constantine know enough about the discussion to come up with this word, or was it suggested to him by his ecclesiastical advisor Hosius of Cordoba, as some suspect?) Eventually, the assembly agreed

<sup>2</sup> Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), 188.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity* (1910; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 628.

on a formula that was based on the creed of Caesarea [the Palestinian confession], but with a number of additions that clearly rejected Arianism.<sup>4</sup>

The Nicene Creed has been revised a bit through the years. But from AD 325 until now, the Nicene Creed has proclaimed the glorious truth of the Christian faith that Jesus is God. As adopted by the Council of Nicea, the Nicene Creed read:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, that is, from the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true

God, begotten, not made, of one substance [*homoousios*] with the Father, through whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth; who for us men and our salvation descended and became incarnate, becoming human, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended to the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

But those who say that there was when he was not, and that before being begotten he was not, or that he came from that which is not, or that the Son of God is of a different substance or essence, or that he is created, or mutable, these the catholic church anathematizes.<sup>5</sup>

—AL



<sup>4</sup> González, *The Story of Christianity*, 188–89.

<sup>5</sup> This creed can be found in many places, for instance, González, *The Story of Christianity*, 189.

# 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](http://lawgospel.com)

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

“He took his brother by the heel in the womb.” –  
Hosea 12:3

The name Jacob is not a bad name.

Surely, among us it has acquired an evil connotation, and this connotation has gradually become the only significance we attach to the name. When the name Jacob is mentioned, we think of a deceiver, of one who employed dishonest methods against his brother to obtain the birthright and the blessing connected with it. Jacob signifies a supplanter, a deceiver, a man who cunningly devises evil plans against his brother; in plain language, a crook. Jacob is a man who is cunning enough and wicked enough to place, at the psychological moment, a dish of fragrant pottage under the nose of his brother who is raving with hunger and then induces him to sell his birthright for a moment of immediate physical enjoyment and satisfaction. Still worse, Jacob, the name Jacob, suggests immediately the incident of a son taking advantage of his father's blindness upon the advice of his equally deceitful mother to obtain the birthright blessing by means of a wicked contrivance.

Not infrequently this is all that is said about Jacob's struggle to obtain the birthright blessing. When the story of Jacob and Esau is told in our Sunday schools, it is pointed out how wicked Jacob was in his attitude over against his brother, and when finally the climax is reached and Esau is pictured as standing before his father in bitter repentance, imploring him for the blessing, the fornicator has the sympathy of all, and by all Jacob is detested. Esau is the hero, Jacob the wicked deceiver. Rebekah and Jacob are a company of wicked deceivers, of shameless

crooks. And not Esau, but Jacob often becomes the warning example as to how we ought not to live. It is only at the Jabbok, when Jacob's name becomes Israel, that he is converted, that he becomes a better man. But before that he is nothing but a miserable hypocrite.

And thus sacred history is turned into a modern novel with a good moral to be honest like Esau, though also in him it is to be condemned that he fell for the temptation of Jacob.

Now, there is another side to this narrative, a side which ought to receive the first emphasis. And to force this upon our attention we started out by saying that the name Jacob is not a bad name.

Surely, detestable are the methods Jacob continually employs until he meets God at the Jabbok and his name is changed to Israel. From a purely natural, moral point of view it is strange that Jacob and not Esau is the beloved. Never would we want to be understood as defending the manner in which Jacob induced his brother to sell him the birthright. Never would we say one word in defense of the methods employed by Jacob and his mother to obtain the blessing of the birthright from blind Isaac. All this stands condemned. And Scripture, though at first silent in regard to this condemnation of Jacob's methods, condemns it once for all when it tells us of Jacob's struggle with Jehovah at the Jabbok. But after this is plainly understood and has received due emphasis we hasten to add that you have not done justice to the narrative of Scripture by presenting it only in this light. Nay, we would say that by merely relating of Jacob's wicked methods and Esau's weakness you have failed to

get at the heart of the sacred narrative, and failed, too, to give the right explanation of the name Jacob. In the light of pure natural morality you can never explain the facts of Scripture. Unless you take into account, and consider the history in the light of the spiritual principle that separated the two brothers, the motive power of sin and grace that actuated Esau and Jacob respectively, you cannot explain all the facts in the case.

How would you explain the meeting of God and Jacob at Bethel shortly after the latter obtained the blessing from Isaac by deceit? We read (Gen. 28:10–15): “And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and went to Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold! the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” Now, notice that this happens immediately after Jacob deceived his father, obtained the blessing, and is forced to leave his father’s house because of the wrath of his brother and to avoid his marrying one of the daughters of Heth. Jacob is on the verge of departing from the land promised to his fathers. He knows not when, he knows not whether he shall ever return thither. The consciousness that he is fleeing from the land of promise that now belongs to him by dint of the blessing he obtained; besides, the consciousness of the manner in which he obtained the blessing and the birthright may well have brought him to

a state of doubt as to whether Jehovah would actually set the seal of his divine approval upon his heirship. We would, perhaps, expect that the Lord would leave Jacob in this state of mind. At least, we would suppose that now that Jehovah appears to him he would reprove him for his wicked methods. But nothing of the kind happens at Bethel. The Lord appears to him there as his covenant God. He reestablishes his covenant with him, assures him that he shall surely receive the land from which he is now departing and that he shall be heir to the entire promise made to Abraham. He assures Jacob that he will be with him, care for him, and protect him wherever he may turn; in short, that he will be his God, his shield and reward. How is this possible if we consider Jacob’s life heretofore as one way of wicked deceit?

And the same is true of the text we quoted above from Hosea 12. The prophet is reproving the people for their miserable weakness and lack of faith in Jehovah. They are no fighting people any more. Ephraim feedeth on wind. They made a covenant with the Assyrians and carry their oil into Egypt. And to this people, that have lost the strength of faith to fight and rely upon the nations instead of upon Jehovah, their God, Hosea upholds the example of Jacob, who fought both in holding his brother’s heel in the womb and in having power with God. It is plain from the entire text that the peculiar incident of Jacob’s holding his brother’s heel in the womb is quoted approvingly. As Jacob, so must Israel be, a fighting people, fighting in the strength of faith for the kingdom of God. We ask again: How is this to be explained if Jacob’s holding his brother’s heel as he did in the womb, and as he actually did up to the time of his flight from Canaan to Padan Aram, is to be viewed only as a manifestation of wickedness and deceit? Evidently, this is impossible.

The name Jacob means “heelholder.”

As such the name is upheld before Israel as an example, not of what they ought to hate and eschew, but of what they themselves ought to be.

It speaks of Jacob as the man of fighting strength, rooted in the faith in God's unchangeable promise.

It pictures him as fighting for the possession of the kingdom of God with his carnal brother.

As such we want to study the history of Jacob and Esau a little more fully. Jacob, the heelholder, is an example to Israel and to the people of God at all times. Not, indeed, in his employment

of an arm of flesh. Not in his deceit and cunning wickedness. This is condemned. And at the Jabok Jacob learns very emphatically that this is wrong, and that all his attempts in this direction are of no avail. But in his irrepressible desire to be heir of the kingdom of God Jacob is the example for the people of God at all times.

But we will have more of this next time.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

