

# Election and Reprobation #10 Concerning Jacob and Esau

by John Calvin

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*The sermon emphasizes God's role in fostering peace and the necessity of humility and repentance in human relationships.*

**Duration:** 56:17

**Scripture:** Genesis 26:26

**Topics:** "Spiritual Protection", "Godly Reconciliation"

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## Description

In this sermon, John Calvin focuses on the story of Isaac and Abimelech in Genesis 26. He emphasizes the importance of separating oneself from those who despise God, as their influence can lead to spiritual destruction. Calvin also highlights the need for reconciliation and humility when wronging others, emphasizing the importance of confessing and seeking forgiveness. He concludes by emphasizing the significance of God's protection and peace in a world filled with potential harm and animosity. Overall, Calvin's sermon emphasizes the need for believers to live in accordance with God's principles and to seek peace and reconciliation with others.

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## Transcript

The sermon we'll hear today is the tenth sermon of Jacob Medesa, from the book Sermons on Election and Reprobation, from John Calvin. Genesis chapter 26, starting in verse 26. He takes his text.

Now Abimelech coming unto him to Gerar, with Accusath his friend, and Pechol the captain of his host. Isaac saith unto them, Why came you unto me, seeing you hated me, and have sent me away from you? Who said unto him, We saw for a surety that Jehovah was with thee. Therefore we said, Let there be an oath between us, that is, between us and thee.

Let us therefore strike a covenant with thee. Ask vengeance upon thyself, if thou shalt hurt us, like as we have not touched thee, and like as we have done thee good, and have sent thee away with peace. Do thou consent now, thou blessed of the Lord.

When therefore he had made them a feast, they did eat and drink, and rising in the morning they swore either to other. And Isaac led them forth, and they went from him with peace. And it came to pass that the selfsame day, Isaac's servants coming unto him, showed him concerning that well which they had digged,

and said unto him, We have found waters.

And he called the name Sahiba. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba even until this day. Now when Esau was forty years old, he married a wife named Judith, the daughter of Beer the Kithite, and Basmatha, the daughter of Elon the Kithite, who were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

Howsoever men living in this world are subject to many miseries and afflictions, yet nevertheless the most part of the evils that they endure proceed from themselves, every one of them being as a wolf to his companion. We are compassed about with savage beasts who are altogether our enemies. There is neither heaven nor earth nor other elements that do not bring with them a thousand hurts.

We know not how to go upon the water, but we must be within half a foot of our death. There needs but one torment to swallow up a people. The earth also has many annoyances as if God had threatened us on every side.

But when we shall make comparison, there are no wild beasts nor heaven nor earth nor anything whatsoever which so much annoys men as each one annoys his neighbor. Now for this cause, we ought to think it a singular benefit of God bestowed upon us when he gives us peace, and that we are not oppressed and wronged on every side, when no mischief is devised against us, no hurt nor damage done unto us. It must necessarily be that the protection of God have a hand in it, seeing that every man will always be as a wolf unto his neighbors, as we have said.

And this is the mark whereunto this present story tends. For Moses would show that after God had appeared to Isaac, he yet farther declares his favor unto him, in that the king of Gerar came unto him and sought his amity and friendship, and hereby was Isaac honored, and especially it was unto him a great advantage, because he might always have been in doubt, inasmuch as he had been greatly envied in the country and had been constrained to depart from that place, notwithstanding he had lived among them in all humanity and courtesy, he might therefore have been always in great suspense, fearing the rage of his neighbors. But God made them to come unto him of their own accord, and not only to show themselves friends, but they flatter him, and fear that he will hurt them, and therefore they demand a covenant to be made between them with a solemn oath.

Now we have to note here, first of all, that God has the hearts of men in his own hand to mollify their hardness when it pleases him, and to abate all their rage, and to turn them to courtesy and kindness. For certainly the king of Gerar had not changed his nature when he came to Isaac, and on the other hand, if he feared Isaac, he might have conspired with his subjects and neighbors, and so have set upon him altogether. On the other hand, he had given no occasion to doubt of him, inasmuch as Isaac had not given him any argument of distrusting him.

He rather had behaved himself in such a way that he plainly declared that he desired not to grieve any, no, not so much as his presence, for we have seen how he departed from their company. It must necessarily be, therefore, that God stirred up these profane people to cause them to come unto Isaac, and to submit themselves, as they do with such humility, that they entreat a poor man, a stranger, who had no great credit among them, nor had any but his own family, which he kept apart, without giving any token of attempting any such manner. Before, God had laid the bridle in their neck, but this was to prove the patience of his servant, for when he was denied water, and that in the end it was said unto him that he was stronger than they, and that he could be no longer suffered, there is no doubt but that God then exercised him to the end he might try what patience there was in him.

And so Isaac knew that if it had pleased God to give him peaceable dwelling in that country where he was, that he should not have been driven from that place, but, inasmuch as he saw men perk up against him, he knew that it was as a passport from God for him to depart. Now, on the contrary, we must also note that God moved them suddenly to come towards Isaac, and to appease and abolish all enmities and quarrels, which might yet be moved, either on the one side or on the other. Let us mark well, then, when any outrage is done against us, and there where we shall have endeavored to do pleasure and service to everyone, that we shall be wonderfully pricked and tormented, that this should be done by God's appointment, who wills us to strive, not in doing evil, or requiting evil for evil, but by processing our souls in patience, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has to that exhorted us.

And likewise, on the contrary, when we shall see men to be favorable unto us, and to intend no evil quarrel or riot against us, let us know that God has pity upon us, and that he governs his creatures, and directs them to such purpose as he sees good. And likewise, let us beseech God, as often as our enemies shall use any cruelty against us, and that we cannot win them by any means, nor by any moderation that we can use, that it will please him to put to his hand, knowing that he can turn, when it shall please him, those that are wolves into sheep. This is that which we have to learn, first of all, by this history.

But it is said that Isaac, at their first coming, spoke bluntly enough in this way, Why are you coming to me, seeing you hated me, and draw me out from amongst you? We shall see by the sequel of the matter, that Isaac nourished no spite, nor bitterness, nor any desire of revenge in his heart, for he was quickly appeased. And when he upbraided Abimelech and all his company, that they had hated and persecuted him, it was not in manner of any injury, so as we are accustomed to do, for if any spite be done unto us, or any wrong, we sharpen our tongues to speak evil and to slander. There is nothing but hatreds, contentions and bickering.

To be short, if we could tear them in pieces that have hurt us, we would willingly do it. And this is it that Solomon says in the book of Proverbs chapter 18, verses 2 and 3, that hatred discovereth reproaches, faults and injuries. When the hearts then are thus set on fire, it is not possible, but that the tongues also must overflow to outrage one against the other.

But Isaac took no such course. But we have to note that whenever we shall be patient, that this hinders not, but that we use our liberty to show them that have faulted the wrong that they have done unto us, and so make them to understand their offense. To the end, all may profit them.

It is true that in this case we must thoroughly examine our affection. For it is a very hard and rare thing that a man shall have been provoked and offended, that he should not be moved with some passion, and so always pursue his own particular cause. And therefore I have said that we must enter into ourselves and diligently mark, if we be not moved with some desire of revenge or tainted with some hatred or enmity.

When we shall have thoroughly known this and find ourselves clear that we may have an open mouth to show them their offense, that shall have wronged us, not to be revenged in condemning of them, but to the end, that they flatter not themselves in their sins, as this is a very common evil against men. Lo, then, a point which we have diligently to mark, that is, that the patience of the faithful is not without all touch of any passion, neither is it against this that we frankly show them. You have done me wrong, and you have offended God, and you have had no occasion to do so.

And yet, that they always have special regard unto the salvation of those who have persecuted them and have been their enemies. For this, that Isaac nips them together with this, was undoubtedly as an

abomination, whereby he sought the good and salvation of them to whom he spoke so bluntly. For if he had cloaked it, what profit might come to him by that? The others would have thought it deep hypocrisy if he had made show to have been contented and well pleased with them, and that he had nothing but honey in his mouth, and to have said, Lo, it is even so.

Abimelech, knowing himself to be faulty, would have thought, See, a double man and a liar. Lo, would they gain that cloak so much, and set such a fair countenance upon it. So then, although the children of God be patient, and that they be always ready to forgive all wrongs committed against them, and have not any manner of ways cankered hearts against their enemies, yet they cease not oftentimes to say, See wherein you have done me wrong.

And this is to show that they walk in all directness and simplicity. And this end ought always to be kept. That is to say, when we shall be grieved, or any wrong or extortion shall be done unto us, that yet we procure the always the good of our enemies, and that the reproofs and accusations that we make unto them be so many proclamations or warnings to draw them to the right way, and to touch them, to the intent they be not hardened and made obstinate, and that they may be better advised in time to come, and that they fight not against God, thinking they have to do with men, as it is very likely that Isaac did here, who would likewise provide for the time to come.

For this shall be very lawful for us, when we shall have suffered any wrong, to do as much as lies in us, to rid ourselves from it. For although our Lord Jesus Christ commands us to be ready, when we shall have received one blow upon the one cheek, to turn the other, yet it means not that we should go and provoke our enemies, and give them occasion to use us. We ought to avoid this as much as is possible for us.

And by all good and loving means, we ought to stop their malice, who have no fear of God in them. Isaac then had respect to himself in this case, but it was not to the end to be avenged, nor to render like for like. He only contented himself to have set a bar against all those which had entreated him evil, and dealt unjustly with him before time.

To the end they might be stayed, and might discontinue from such wrongs. This briefly is that which we have to learn out of this place, and this rule is very necessary. For often times when men are reconciled one to the other, they must be silent, and then there shall need none other means.

And he yet who shall have sustained the greatest wrong, he shall have more liberty, and more boldness to justify himself, against them that would make us believe that the lamb has troubled the water. Let us mark well therefore, that when any shall have done wrong to his neighbor, if he come not to pursue his particular quarrels so stoutly, that he rest on that matter, that it shall be good that each one be notified, and that he which has done the wrong, notwithstanding know it, confess it, and be humbled in it. But we see that this greatly profited not.

So far off was it that Isaac pursued not the matter to the uttermost, although he saw that his admonition was not received, and that it touched not their hearts to whom he had spoken. Howsoever it was, he dealt not spitefully against them. Notwithstanding mark Abimelech, who says, Like as we have been friendly unto thee, and have done thee no hurt, so swear unto us, that thou wilt attempt nothing against us.

Abimelech not only hides the evil which he has committed, and would excuse it, but he boasts that he has done his duty wonderful well towards Isaac. And this is the common practice, as we have said. For there is nothing more hard for a man than to condemn himself, although he feel himself faulty, imperfect.

Man will be drawn sooner to anything than to this lowliness, which, yet in spite of this, is a token necessarily required to true repentance. For if a man feel that he have faulted, and have true repentance, he must necessarily confess himself guilty before God, and likewise towards his neighbor, when it shall be required. And therefore our Savior, Christ, also exhorts us, that if we have any quarrel against our neighbors, that is to say, if we have offended them, that rather we should leave our sacrifices at the altar to the end, to seek agreement, than to flatter ourselves, and to harden our hearts, despising those to whom we are bound.

Now, he speaks of that time of the sacrifices, but that as much as if he should, but that was as much as if he should have said, that we cannot pray unto God, nor do anything that shall be acceptable unto him, as long as we disdain to repair the faults which we have committed. Now, although God commanded us never so straightly to humble ourselves when we have offended, yet none can attain unto this way. And that is here sufficiently taught us, in the person of Abimelech, and of his companions.

For men are so blinded, both with self-love, pride, and arrogance, that they cannot in any case be brought to this, to say, I have offended. For they are always ashamed to confess their fault, and yet notwithstanding, are not ashamed to be condemned before God and his angels. And yet, when they have remorse in themselves, they must condemn themselves, in spite of their teeth.

They can trembly trace out all the ways that can be to maintain their corruption, they have their goodly starting holes to uphold themselves in their mischievous cause. But when they shall have won, both great and small, whether it be through corruption or favor, or by any other means, and all the world stand for them, yet must they in the end come to the judgment of their own conscience, which they cannot abide. And as I have said, there they shall find themselves to have gotten nothing by all their fetches and starting holes.

For in spite of their beards, willingly, unwillingly, they must feel themselves guilty before God. Now, when this is set before us, it is not to the end that we should sleep in any such vice, but to the intent that we, knowing ourselves to be subject unto it, should the rather seek for remedy. When Moses says, therefore, that Abimelech made as if he had reliquited himself towards Isaac, and we know the contrary, by that which is being rehearsed, it was not only to show that Abimelech was a hypocrite and a double-man, but it was also to set a looking-glass before our eyes, to the end we might know that there is not anyone among us which is not inclined to flatter himself, and who is not bent to bolster out an ill cause, although he were sufficiently convinced to have offended, that yet nevertheless pride would not suffer us to submit ourselves, lo then the purpose and drift of Moses.

So then, what have we to do? That everyone gauge and sound himself to the bottom to find what is in him. And after we have duly examined ourselves, we shall find that there is not any one of us that would not hide his faults, and that would not wrong his adversary when we have any quarrel. And hereupon it is that we seek out goodly colors to excuse ourselves, and starting holes and delays, and turn as they say, black to white and white to black, that we might justify ourselves.

Seeing therefore that we are subject to such an evil, let us fight against it. For it is not enough for us to feel our vice, for we must forsake it, and in forsaking it, we must yet resist it. Albeit we cannot altogether get the upper hand of it.

And when we shall come to put this in practice, and shall have offended this man here and that man there, let us not look upon men to dim and blur our eyes, but let every man withdraw himself into his own secret

and say, Hey, what can I do now? It is true that I might justly do wrong unto my adversary, for he has offended me thus and thus. But notwithstanding, am I innocent before God and his angels? It is proper that I begin to judge myself, for although that I be a poor blind wretch, yet for all that, I feel in myself that I have offended, and I cannot lie unto myself. And in the meanwhile, will God be deceived? When I have cunningly disguised, will not he find out the least drop for all that? So then there is no other means to be absolved and released before God, but this, that I condemn myself.

Mark then, I say, how we ought to practice this doctrine, and to apply it for to our use and advantage. And to be short, how often soever we offend, let us note, that repentance contains in it confession, not to go and whisper in the ear of a priest, as was done in the papacy, but a confession to give glory to God, and likewise, to make amends for the fault which was committed against our neighbors. And therefore, they who committed any wrong or outrage against another, it was necessary for them to labor the amendment thereof in humbling themselves.

And in whatever manner, it was not to be ashamed to say, I have offended you. I pray you, forgive me. For mark also, how we shall obtain favor and forgiveness before God.

And by what means those wrongs we have done to our neighbors shall not cry out for vengeance against us. For undoubtedly, although they to whom we have done the wrong content themselves, and think no more of it, yet the evil shall be enrolled before God, and cry more loud before his majesty, than if all men were armed and set themselves against us. So then, to the end our faults may be blotted out, and defaced before God, and that there be no cry that may hasten the Lord to judgment against us by reason of the offenses that we have committed.

Let us learn in such manner to appease all stripes and quarrels that everyone may prevent it by humbling himself with an upright and pure confession. This is that which we have to mark upon this point. Now on the other side, we see, as I have already touched, that Isaac had not, as a man would say, an heart puffed up, neither that nourished any manner of enmity against such as had been his enemies, for he pursued them not.

He had indeed special cause against the Bimelech and his company, for as St. Paul says, They which are not of the flock and body of the church, we cannot judge them, to the end to bring them to repentance, as we may those which make profession of Christianity, who want out of hand, as much as lies in them, to receive admonition of their faults. For this is the order which God has set among all those that are his, that we should be subject to receive admonition, both from great and small, so that there is, as it were, a mutual jurisdiction without the sort, and without authority, if we do our duty. For everyone having the word of God in his mouth, is, as a judge, to show his neighbor the faults which he has committed.

He shall be a judge in one respect, and he shall suffer himself to be judged in another. Mark then how we judge these that are of the household. As St. Paul says, That is to say, such as are of our body, and of the religion of the faithful, and of the children of God.

But those that are without, although we condemn them, yet we cannot call them so familiarly to say, you have offended. For they have no such acquaintance with us, and there is no such mutual right, as there is among the members of the body of the church. And this is the cause, why Isaac deals not so earnestly with Abimelech and his people, as if they had been knit together in one faith, and worshiped the same God, and had been of one church, and had had one and the self same order established among them.

It is very likely, that Isaac would not have passed this over, to have said unto him, What, come you hither with your brags, making as though you were my good friends, and had used nothing but courtesy towards me? And what courtesy was that to deny me water? Yes, and to dam up the wells that I had dug by my own labor, and the sweat of those that were mine. And this could bring you no loss or hindrance? And yet through malice you have gone about to put out mine eyes. And in the end you have driven me out, and have not suffered me to dwell among you.

And what friendship was this? Isaac, therefore, might have stood to have maintained his cause, if Abimelech had been capable to have received such reproof. But it was enough for him freely to have laid open his affection. For seeing Abimelech would not be corrected, neither had any such repentance as was requisite for him, on that matter, he leaves him.

So then, when we shall have labored to bring those to repentance that have offended, if we see them obstinate, we can no further press or urge them. It is true that if they be members of the church, we must follow them. To the end they continue not obstinate.

And if they will not endeavor to open themselves, and that we see they will not be displeased with their faults, that yet nevertheless we hold them as vanquished. For mark how it is necessary for us to handle them who are so wild and hard-hearted. My friend, now you show your impudence.

Before I well perceived that you were straight out of the right path. But now I see that you are altogether desperate and without hope. For you do manifestly despise God, and what do you get, either in this or in that? For your offense is well known.

And thus we may very well beat them down, who imagine, through toughness and stubbornness, to win their cause. But if we have to do with those which have no acquaintance with us, and are not our brethren, let it suffice us to have showed them the truth in one word. For this shall be dearly enough bought of them, if they think not better upon it to humble themselves, and for our part, when we shall be reprov'd for any offense.

Let us not wait for any long process, and such great inquests, to be convinced as it were by fine force of many witnesses. But let us receive correction patiently, as soon as it shall be offered us, and not be like to those that throw up a handful of ashes to take away the clear light. Let us therefore confess our faults, for this is the only remedy, except we resist God.

And let us know that when any warning or admonition shall be given us, that then God would have His grace felt of us, and that He is careful to draw us back, to the end we should not perish, that we should not remain obstinate, and that Satan should not take possession of us. Let us know this, to the end we may come to repentance, and true lowliness. Now Isaac shows yet better, that he keeps no mind of revenge or enmity, although they had offended him, for he prepares a banquet, and they eat and drink together.

Lo, hear a point which we have well to meditate upon, for this also shows, how that we must fight against our passion, all the time of our life, so that this is as it were the ABCs of Christians, not to requite evil for evil, but contrary wise, to render good for evil, and to get the victory in this matter. The witch cannot enter into our imagination. This I say is as it were our ABCs, and there is no such perfection in us, but that we should begin here.

That so soon as we desire, and have a will to serve God, it is necessary that we be stripped of all bitterness, hatred and enmity, of all desire to revenge, not only to forgive our enemies, without procuring of their hurt, but also that we be ready to do them good. But now who is he that discharges himself, in this of the hundredth part? But we shall find, albeit it seems that many are, as they say, subordinate angels, and have nothing but a fervent desire to serve God, and to honor Him. Yes, and there is nothing in them but love, and they are therein resolute and settled.

Yet as soon as they be provoked, the poison so breaks forth, and afterwards dwells so long in them, that they keep the remembrance of some small offense in their hearts, all the time of their life. When we see therefore, that we cannot be purged at the first day, nor the first year, of this cursed affection of revenge, so much the more we must apply this remedy, to the end we may be ordered, and governed by the Spirit of God, not to remain asleep in enmities and bitterness, deep-seated ill will, but willingly to forgive them, and to be thoroughly patient in all things. And so, we shall have well profited, all the time of our life, when we shall have learned, to what use this history of Isaac, is rehearsed unto us.

That is, that he prepared a banquet for his enemies, not in a ceremony, or for fashion's sake only, but to show that he was pure and clean from all malice, and that he had forgotten and buried all the offenses, where that they might pick any quarrels. Now it is said a little after, that they made a covenant together, and swear each to other. It is true that Isaac had to hurt, when the other demanded of him, that he would promise and swear unto them, not to wrong them, nor hurt them.

For they had had sufficient proof, that they had not found him a violent man, nor one given to do any harm. Wherefore, come they then to disturb him farther. He might have put all this back, but he does yield something of his right, as when we would purchase peace among men.

We must always have this means, not to give it them wholly, who have done us wrong, but for all that, not too extremely to challenge, and hold whatsoever belongs unto us, without yielding unto them one crumb, as they say of it. For if every man should be given, to his own particular right, men could never be united, and knit together. And although they were, they would never cease from day to day, to have new occasions, to devour and eat up one another.

There is therefore but one way, to nourish peace and harmony, and that is, that no man seek, that which is his own. As also St. Paul, makes mention thereof, speaking unto us of charity, in 1 Corinthians, the 13th chapter, the 5th verse, where he says expressly, that charity has this property, not to seek her own. And further, when he exhorts us to live peaceably, and that we should love brotherly fellowship, and that none of us should give himself to ambition, nor have a desire to be more, greater and higher, and to have the upper hand.

For the word which he uses means, there should be no desire of superiority, or having the upper hand. Now, as long as we shall have this desire, as I have said, low as it were a fire, blown up and kindled, there are a thousand ways, which Satan will find, to set us at such discord, at war, dissension, and such contention, that it should seem we would overthrow all. So let us mark well, to the end, that we may dwell in friendship, and brotherly harmony with our neighbors.

It is necessary for everyone, that he forsake and yield of his own right, and that everyone keep not this extremity, to say, I will keep whatsoever is mine, and will pursue it, and forego nothing, by no manner of means whatsoever, when we shall deal thus. But here, by the way, we see that it is lawful, for the children of God, to enter into league, and friendship with heathen people, and such as profess nothing, but Paul's

religion. As long as it is not, to join ourselves with them, nor to draw in the same yoke.

For we must mark well, that admonition of Paul, who says in 2 Corinthians 6, verse 14, Take heed that you draw not in the yoke together, with unbelievers. For he speaks this by way of comparison, as if two oxen were coupled together, to draw in one yoke, they must one answer the other. And though they be wild, and sometimes straggle, yet being tied together by the next with the yoke, they must follow the same course.

Saint Paul would show us, that we must not be coupled, with unbelievers, in such way that we be held, with their chains. And that we be so entangled with them, that we consent unto evil, neither in any respect, to be tied therein. But only for to nourish peace, to stop outrages and violences.

It shall always be lawful, for to enter into league with them. Let us take heed therefore, that we be separated from all their malice, and therein, that we have no acquaintance with them. And especially, that we condemn their iniquity, as much as lies in us, so as we be not, so much as companions and brethren with the wicked.

No, not associates. As it is said, especially in the fifteenth psalm, that we must hate them. But nevertheless, to stop their rage, and to take away all occasion of hurt, and to shut the door against them.

To the end, they put not in practice their lewd enterprises. We may well meet with their evil, by making league with them. To the end, they may not flow to all licentiousness of evil, when we shall have put such a bar, first before them.

Yes, we see that God has showed us this favor and grace, that we should take his name to witness, to the end we might be assured, one to another. Whereby he shows, how acceptable a thing concord, peace and agreement among men, is unto him. And in what detestation, he has all quarrels, wars, wrongs, hurts, outrages and oppressions, which men shall do, each unto other.

For this is no small matter, that God gives his own name, so to be used, and as it were, pledges it for security. And when a prince must give some of his children for hostage, he will do it with great difficulty, and much ado. But our Lord gives his own name for hostage, when there is cause of nourishing peace among us, yes, and when the matter stands so, that concord must be had with infidels, to the end, they may leave off to rage against us, and not hurt us.

Seeing then, God has permitted, to lend his own name to this purpose, so much the more ought we to be bent, to seek by all the means that can be, that men may be peaceable, and that we have no quarrels with them. Yes, that we seek to appease them that are raised up, we must, as much as lies in us, prevent them. But yet, if we cannot altogether perform it, when we shall see any quarrels begun, we should endeavor to kill it.

Yes, by the means that I have already spoken of, that is to say, by foregoing outright, as much as shall be possible for us. This then is the sum, of that which we have to learn. Now, it is not said in this place, in what form they swear, but we shall find afterwards, that Isaac always made his oath, unto the living and everlasting God, rendering honor unto him, to whom it belonged, albeit he had to do with heathen people, who had forged idols, and corrupted the true service of God, through their own superstitions, yet continued he in his own soundness.

Thereupon it is said, that his servants being returned, as we expounded yesterday, they said unto him, we have found living water. And after, he adds concerning Esau, that he took a wife from among the Hethites, yes, two wives, which were bitter to the souls of Isaac and Rebekah. Here we see on the one side, how God would comfort his servant every way, for it was not only showed him, that he should be assured from thenceforth, that none should hurt him, seeing the king himself of the country, was come to seek to him, but also he had given him, which he might enjoy peaceably, and quietly as his own.

When therefore our Lord shows this great favor towards Isaac, let us know, that he tempts not him above their strength, but always sweetens their afflictions in such manner, that they shall not be as it were, ever oppressed and quite overthrown. And let us hope, that altogether like as Isaac was upheld, and that God after he had afflicted him, looked also again unto him, to give him somewhat with which to comfort him. So likewise must we wait, and then we shall not be deceived, if we rest there.

For God knows our frailty, and there is no doubt, but he will give us such taste of his mercy and favor, that we shall have good cause to bless his name, and have no occasion to grieve ourselves in such manner, that we know not how to comfort ourselves any more in him. But the principle point is, that Esau took two wives from among the Hittites. Here we begin to see already, that Esau was not only once profaned, but that he went on in that course, and gave himself wholly to it, as we have showed up to this time.

That after he had well filled his belly with the pottage, that Jacob his brother had prepared for him, and when he had eaten and drunk, he went his way and despised his birthright. Moses also rehearses now, that he took two wives from among the Hittites, for if he had had any remorse within him, and that he had esteemed the promise, of the spiritual inheritance made unto his father, it is certain, that he would have held himself as separate, from all those people. For he knew full well, how his grandfather Abraham, had behaved himself in that point, that he had made his servant to swear solemnly, that he should not take a wife for his son Isaac, in the land of Canaan.

He knew, that his mother was sought after in a far country, in Mesopotamia, because God would have this house, as it were, torn apart, and would not have it mingled and mashed, with those of that country. What does he therefore, when he takes two wives of the inhabitants of Canaan, whom God had accursed, this was as much as if he had forsaken, the promise of salvation, and as though he had renounced, to make any more reckoning thereof, than if it had not been worth a straw. Lo, one testimony already, how Esau made himself unworthy of his birthright.

And this came to pass, because he was not governed, by the Spirit of God, as also we have shown before, that God will so hold in, and keep his elect, and in such a way ratify, and seal in their hearts, his goodness and fatherly adoption, that they shall soar up to him, and despise this world. To the end, they may rejoice, in those spiritual benefits, he has prepared for them. But contrarywise, he lets loose the reins, to all those whom he has rejected, in such a way, that they harden themselves.

And although this be not done all at once, at the first push, yet notwithstanding, a man shall find in the end, that there is no seed, of the fear of God, nor of godliness, in them. This therefore is the thing, we have to bear away upon this place. And all this, let us learn in such manner, to behave ourselves, that always, we labor to separate ourselves from them, that would draw us to destruction.

For it is without all doubt, that if we live over familiarly, with the despisers of God, they will soon defile us. Their fellowship and conversation, is a deadly pestilence. And so much the rather, it necessitates us, to walk with carefulness in this, taking good heed unto ourselves, that we defile not ourselves, with the

filthiness of this world.

And let us in the mean season acknowledge, that it is also, a wonderful providence of God, that he would have Esau, to take two wives in this country, for this was to the end, that he might be as it were, cut off from the house of his father Isaac. He loved him dearly. And although his wives distressed him, yet for all that, he could not withdraw his heart from Esau.

Knowing in spite of this, that God had rejected him. And in this he resisted God, without ever thinking upon the matter. But God brought therein, after another manner.

When he saw such infirmity, in his servant Isaac, he brought to pass in the end, that he must utterly forsake his son Esau. Mark then, how God ruled in all such way, that his church continued always, in her smallness. As it were hidden under the earth, as though it had been nothing.

There remained no more but Jacob, as we shall see often times. And Isaac was half spent. He was three score years old, when his children were born.

And now was Esau of the age of forty years, when he took his wife. Isaac therefore was very old. And concerning Jacob, he was also forty years old, and yet was not married.

And where then was this stock? It should seem that the church must quite perish, and all the promises of God be utterly abolished. But although it were so small, that it was contemptible in men's judgments, yet we see that God so well governed his church, that it remained pure and sound. And that which was profane, was cut off from it, as if a house should be swept, and the sweeping be cast out of doors.

So fell it out that Esau was rejected, and that Jacob remained alone, as also the heritage was appointed to him. But now let us fall down before the high majesty of our good God, with acknowledging of our faults, and praying him that he will make us to feel them in such way, that it may serve to make us continually to mourn before him, and to ask pardon from them in such way, that we may labor to resist it, and more and more be withdrawn from it, until we shall be thoroughly clothed with his righteousness. And that he will support us in our weaknesses, so as we leave not off upon him as our father, although we fall many ways.

So let us all say, O mighty God, Heavenly Father. Please stand with me and we'll pray together. This recording is copyrighted and was made with the permission of Old Paths Publications, and may not be duplicated without their written permission.

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