

# Gottschalk of Orbais and the Predestinarian Controversy

## *Medieval Church History – Session Ten*

“When Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, ‘The older shall serve the younger.’ As it is written, ‘Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.’”  
—Romans 9:10-13 NKJV

### **I. Introduction**

#### A. Theological Landscape of Late Early-Medieval Europe

##### 1. Augustine’s Legacy

##### 2. The Slow Abandonment of Augustine’s Theology

#### B. Gottschalk (AD 805/808-October 30, 868/869)

### **II. Gottschalk: His Life**

#### A. Birth and Early Life

#### B. Ministry

#### C. Trial at Mainz and Imprisonment

### **III. Gottschalk: His Theology**

#### A. Theology Proper (Doctrine of God)

##### 1. Double/Two-Fold Predestination

##### 2. “Equal Ultimacy”

#### B. Soteriology

##### 1. “Limited”/Definite Atonement

## 2. Double Jeopardy

*“Payment God cannot twice demand,  
First at my bleeding Surety’s hand,  
And then again at mine.”<sup>1</sup>*

### C. Anthropology

#### 1. Human Freedom and Free Will

#### 2. Prevenient Grace

### D. Application: Why Do People Hate Free Grace?

## IV. Gottschalk: His Legacy

### A. Immediate Results

### B. The Protestant Reformation

### C. Jansenism: “Reformed” Catholic Theology?

## V. Assessment and Conclusion

### A. Praiseworthy Courage

### B. God Uses *Faithfulness*

### C. Gottschalk: Cold and Clinical?

#### *Recommended Resources*

Byl, John. “Gottschalk of Orbais - Predestination Controversy.” Sunday School lecture at Heritage Reformed Congregation, Grand Rapids, MI, December 5, 2021. <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=125211638448077>.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Translated by Robert White. 1541. Reprint, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2014; 463-515.

Lawson, Steven. “Who Was Gottschalk of Orbais?” Ligonier Ministries, May 2, 2023. <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/gottschalk>.

Murray, John. *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. 1955. Reprint, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2016; pp. 53-70.

Schaff, Philip. *History of the Christian Church*. 7 vols. New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1867–1910; vol. 4, pp. 522-539.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From the hymn “Faith Reviving” by Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-1778), author of the hymn “Rock of Ages”

<sup>2</sup> This resource can be found online at <https://archive.org/details/christianchurchh04schauoft>.