

The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 3, Paragraph 1 – “Of God’s Decree”,
Message # 12 – “God’s Decree & His Glory” Presented in the
Adult Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall,
on October 24th, 2021.

Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 7 – What are the Decrees of God?

Answer: “The Decrees of God are, His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.”

Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 8 – How doth God execute His Decrees?

Answer: God executes His decrees in the works of creation and providence.

And, I would add – The Redemption of His people, and the judgment of the wicked, through our Lord Jesus Christ)

Paragraph 3 – By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice.

- 1) Matthew 25: 34 1st Timothy 5: 21
- 2) John 12: 37-40 Romans 9: 6-24 1st Peter 2: 8-10 Jude 4

Paragraph 4 – These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

- 1) Matthew 22: 1-14 John 13: 18 Romans 11: 5-6 1st Corinthians 7: 20-22
- 2) 2nd Timothy 2: 19

Paragraph 5 – Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto.

- 1) Romans 8: 30 Ephesians 1: 4-6 Ephesians 9: 2 2nd Timothy 1: 9
- 2) Romans 9: 11-16 Romans 11: 5, 6

1. God Manifests the Glory of His Justice – The Wrath of Man Shall Praise Him.

Psalms 76: 1-12 – “In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel.” “In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion.” “There He broke the arrows of the bow, the shield and sword of battle.” “Selah”. “You are more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.” “The stouthearted were plundered; they have sunk into their sleep; and none of the mighty men have found the use of their hands.” “At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse were cast into a dead sleep.” “You, Yourself are to be feared; and who may stand in Your presence when once You are angry?” “You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared and was still, when God arose to judgment, to deliver all the oppressed of the earth.” “Selah”. Surely the wrath of man shall praise You; with the remainder of wrath You shall gird Yourself.” “Make vows to the Lord your God, and pay them; Let all who are around Him bring presents to Him who ought to be feared.” “He shall cut off the spirit of princes; He is awesome to the kings of the earth.”

God was known by many in Judah in the days in which this was written. In Salem, an abbreviated name for Jerusalem, was His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion. Who should we think about, when we consider the tribe of Judah? None other than our Lord Jesus Christ. He is Lion of the Tribe of Judah. (Revelation 5: 5) We remember how He fulfilled

prophecy and broke the arrows of the bow of the Devil against us, and won the battle for truth and righteousness against Him, and which was against all of us who needed His Kingly victory at the cross, where He shed His blood on our behalf. He is more excellent than the mountains of prey.

When we think of the joys of being in the kingdom of God, we ought most of all to think of Christ our King, as verse 4 says. “You are more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.” Christ, and the knowledge of Him, is more glorious and excellent even than the kingdom that He rules over. He and His kingdom are more excellent than the mountains of prey, which is a word picture of mountains which are inhabited by beasts such as lions and leopards. This is a picture of the kingdoms of this world whose kings rule over their subjects in a way of oppressing them, and ruling over them as dictators and tyrants. It has been decreed by God that Christ’s kingdom shall eventually conquer them all. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

Then in verse 6 we see the description of what God did for Judah at the time when He killed all of Sennacherib’s army in the days of Hezekiah, 185,000 soldiers cast into a dead sleep, their chariots and their horses made useless. All of the enemies of God’s people will ultimately be decisively overthrown because Christ has, and He will, conquer them all. What is the exhortation given, then, to all who hear of this? They ought to conclude that our God is a God to be feared. (vs. 7 and 11) For who will stand in His presence when He is angry?

In verse 10-12 we see the conclusion of the matter in terms of God’s decree of the destruction of wicked men – The wrath of men shall praise You; with the remainder of wrath You shall gird Yourself. Their anger at being overthrown, both by God’s earthly judgments and His eternal judgment upon them by casting them into hell, will be as praise to His eternal justice and judgments upon them.

2. God Manifests the Glory of His Mercy in His having Compassion on those He Predestines to eternal life.

Romans chapter 9, verses 10-16 – “And not only this, but 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.’ “What shall we say then?” “Is there unrighteousness with God?” “Certainly not!” “For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.’ “So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs but of God who shows mercy.”

We see that God had a specific plan in relation to Isaac and Rebecca’s children, and this plan was put into effect before they were born, even while they were still in the womb. In Genesis 25: 21 it says that Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife, because she was barren,; and the Lord granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled within her; and she said, if all is well, why am I like this? So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her: Two nations are in your womb, two people shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger.

This was Jacob and Esau. Esau came out first and was the older, and afterward his brother Jacob came out and his hand took hold of Esau’s heel. That is why they called him Jacob. He was supplanter. The older Esau would serve him, the younger. But the apostle Paul explains

this in Romans 9: 13 as the purpose of God in election, that His purpose would stand, the older would serve the younger. And he explains this by quoting from Malachi chapter 1, verses 2 and 3 in a condensed form. The verses in Malachi say – I have loved you, says the Lord, Yet you say, in what way have You loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?, says the Lord? Yet Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness.”

All of this was according to God’s eternal purpose, His decreed purpose, not only for the nations that they would become, but in terms of what they as individuals would become. God decreed that the older, Esau, would serve the younger, Jacob. But God decreed that He would love Jacob with an everlasting love, while He would leave Esau to act in his sin to his just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice.