

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 3, Paragraph 1 – “Of God’s Decree”,**  
**Message # 16 – “4 Observations on Hardening”, Presented in the**  
**Adult Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall,**  
**on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 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    1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5: 21
- 2) John 12: 37-40    Romans 9: 6-24    1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2: 8-10    Jude 4

**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    2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1: 9
- 2) Romans 9: 11-16    Romans 11: 5, 6

**1. How then should we define God’s Hardening so that God is not seen as the author of sin?**

**If it is not infusing hardness in the heart, what is it?** I believe that we should understand it in this way. It is a progressive just judgment in time and space, based upon His eternal decree concerning that particular person, whereby, because of their persistence in sin, He gives that person over to the sinful thoughts and tendencies of their own heart, to exalt themselves, and to do their own will. He will righteously and deliberately lead them into situations where they will be tempted, and they will be overcome by that temptation, to sin against Him. In His hardening there will be a sometimes gradual, or sometimes sudden, withdrawal of the Holy Spirit’s gracious influences of common grace upon the sinner’s heart so that they will not want to in any way, do the will of God. He makes them hard in relation to Himself, following their hardening their own hearts to His entreaties and warnings.

**Out of this Definition, we can make 4 observations about what God’s hardening is.**

**1. It is a progressive Judgment in time and space based upon His eternal decree.**

**Romans Chapter 2, verses 5 & 6** – “But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds.”

**2. The sinner is given over to the sinful thoughts and tendencies of their own heart.**

**Romans 1: 21-25** – “Because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” “Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an

image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.” “Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator, who is blessed forever.”

### **3. God most deliberately delivers them over to Satan & leads them into temptation.**

By this, I do not mean to say that God tempts any man, but He rather providentially orders the circumstances so that the wicked unrepentant person will come into the temptation to do evil and he will not be able to avoid it. He will not want to avoid it. He will freely and of his own desire, will, and accord, will sin, and thus he will be punished by God for it as a just judgment upon him for his rejection of God’s word to him.

**James 1: 12-15** - “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.” “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.” “Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown brings forth death.”