

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 3, Paragraph 1 – “Of God’s Decree”,**  
**Message # 14 – “God’s Kindness & Hardening”, Presented in the**  
**Adult Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall,**  
**on November 7<sup>th</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

## **Introduction**

### **1. God’s Kindness to Lay in Zion a Chief Cornerstone.**

God’s Mercy is in choosing a sinner in Christ, unto salvation. His Hardening is an Appointment to wrath due to the sinners continued disobedience in relation to the gospel.

**1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2: 6-10** – “Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’ “Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” “They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.” “But you are a chosen generation, (or race or kindred) a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

Peter is speaking of those who believe and he says that them, Christ is precious. But to those who are disobedient and will not receive Him, but reject Him, they stumble. They stumble being disobedient to the word, and to this they were also appointed. (It was decreed of them by God, that this would be what they would bring themselves to by their sins and rebellion against Him. He appointed this, or decreed it, not only from the standpoint that He foreknew it, but also from the standing that He had purposed to pass them by and not show them saving mercy. God is good to all men, but He does not show mercy to all, unto their being saved by Him. We who are believers in Christ, we proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of our darkness and into His marvelous light. We once were sinners like the rest, and once we were not God’s special people, but now because of His mercy, we have found Christ and eternal life.

## **2. God is kind and good to all men, but they must not harden their heart.**

**Psalm 145: 8 & 9** – “The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy.” “The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.”

**Psalm 145: 20** – “The Lord preserves (or will keep) all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.”

We see here in Psalm 145: 8 & 9, and verse 20, that God shows all men much kindness and goodness in providing for them many good things in life. Then, according to His sovereign plan and purpose, He brings to them a preacher or someone who will share His word with them. Through that preacher’s words he commands them in God’s name to repent of their sins. And then when they repeatedly disobey Him, He leaves them to do what He knows that they want to do anyway. He only gives them over to their sin and then judges them, because they do not want to do His will or learn His ways.

## **3. Pharaoh, the great example of a hard heart.**

**Exodus 4: 21** – “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand.’ “But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, so that he will not let the people go.” This was God’s decree. It was His eternal purpose.

**Romans 9: 17 and 18** – ““For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name be declared in all the earth.’ “Therefore He has mercy to whom He will, and whom He wills He hardens.”

**God says to Pharaoh in the Scripture in Exodus 9: 16** – But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. God says – You exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go.”

All of God’s actions are very righteous and just here, towards Pharaoh, dealing with him in the way that He did, because he was such a great sinner, rejecting God’s word to himself. God therefore had determined beforehand that His sovereign power over him would be demonstrated, and that His name be known in all the earth by the great plagues that He brought against him.

**4.. God uses Moses to confront Pharaoh with His will.** He then leaves Pharaoh to himself and his wicked thoughts and desires so that he will act out his sins against Himself and His people Israel. He keeps on in his sins, hardening his heart more and more, and God hardens him as well. He gives him over to the deceitfulness of his own heart, to act out his sin more and more in refusing to let the people go. And he does so to his own destruction, and God’s eternal judgment coming upon him.

**Exodus 5: 1 and 2** – “Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.’ “And Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?’ “I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go.” (This was Pharaoh’s hardening his own heart; the start of his downward progression in sin.)