

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 3, Paragraph 1 – “Of God’s Decree”, Message # 19 –
“God’s Foreordaining the Means”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School Class
by Pastor Paul Rendall, on December 12th, 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 6 – As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so he hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto; wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

- 1) Ephesians 1: 4-8 and 2: 10; 2nd Thessalonians 2: 13 1st Peter 1: 2
- 2) 1st Thessalonians 5: 9 & 10 Titus 2: 14
- 3) Romans 8: 30 Ephesians 1: 5 2nd Thessalonians 2: 13
- 4) 1st Peter 1: 5
- 5) John 6: 64, 65 John 8: 47 John 10: 26 John 17: 9 Romans 8: 28 1st John 2: 19

Paragraph 7 – The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

- 1) Deuteronomy 29: 29
- 2) 1st Thessalonians 1: 4 & 5 2nd Peter 1: 10
- 3) Ephesians 1: 6 Romans 11: 33
- 4) Romans 11: 5, 6, & 20 Colossians 3: 12
- 5) 2nd Peter 1: 10
- 6) Luke 10: 20

In everything concerning our salvation, in terms of the practical application of Christ’s redemption, God uses means.

1. God used the means of Christ’s death and resurrection to redeem all of His elect people, and then effectually calls them unto faith in Him by His Spirit working in due season.

Ephesians 1: 3-12 – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him.” “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”

Now you can see how much we need to praise God for, in the matter of our salvation. According to these verses, we owe nothing to ourselves as to our salvation, but we owe all to Him and to His great mercy and grace in His bringing this great salvation to us personally. Salvation is of the Lord, from beginning to end. God because He is Omniscient and Omnipotent, and Infinitely Wise in everything He does, He is way before us in anything that we do. This is because of His decree. And, because Christ has merited the

application of all the spiritual blessings of salvation to our soul and body, God also then applies them to the individual person that He is intending to save in His own good time.

And yet we do find here, that we as those who have trusted in Christ, we do have responsibilities in relation to coming to better understanding God's decree concerning our salvation. The purpose that He chose us, it says here in 4, is that we should be holy and without blame before Him. We have the responsibility, once we become a Christian by the exercise of faith in Christ, to pursue holiness and cultivate our love for Him, by loving the brethren and peace with all men. Because we have been predestinated to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His decretive will in His decree, when we are saved, when we come to believe in the gospel concerning what Christ has done for us, we have the delightful responsibility to praise the glory of His grace, as it says in verse 6.

God has made us accepted in the Beloved. We have been redeemed by Him through His blood, and we receive the forgiveness of all of our sins according to the riches of His grace which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence. That is, that He knows the best possible way to order everything related to the application of His grace to us, in conveying to us all the blessings of salvation, that we will eternally give Him thanks that it has been done in this way in regard to us. He has made known the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, (that is, in His decree) that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ.

He gathers all elect believers together into the spiritual body of Christ progressively all the way through the History of our race. In this mysterious way, He gathers all things, all elect people into the spiritual body of Christ; this mystery being better understood by the apostles and the early Church, that they who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. That is, that the apostle Paul and the other apostles might bring to the attention of all New Testament saints this wonderful truth which shows the unity of God's purpose and the unity of all believers. God works all these things in the application of salvation according to the counsel of His will, it says in verse 11.

2nd Thessalonians 2: 13 and 14 – “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul gives thanks to God always for these brethren whom He knew were beloved by the Lord. God from the beginning, that is in His eternal Decree, chose them for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. (That was the basis of their salvation, and His means of bringing it about.) He called them, and He calls all of His elect in this very way, by the gospel, and His purpose is for their obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. They obtain this glory in the His grace which is conveyed to their hearts and minds, which transforms them more and more into His blessed image. And they obtain this glory when they die and they behold Him on the throne of His glory and are made perfect in holiness and righteousness in their spirit. And they obtain this glory of Christ when we as glorified believers will meet Him in the air on the last Day, the Day of His 2nd Coming. When He appears, we will be made like Him for we will see Him as He is. Our lowly body will be fashioned to be like His glorious body, to live forever in glory with Him in the New Heavens and New earth.