

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 3, Paragraph 1 – “Of God’s Decree”,
Message # 2 – “Christ Declaring the Decree”, Presented in the
Adult Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall,
on August 1st, 2021.**

Paragraph 1 – “God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably(1), all things, whatsoever comes to pass(2); yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein(3); nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established(4); in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree.”(5)

1) Proverbs 19: 21; Isaiah 14: 24-27; 46: 10, 11; Psalm 115: 3; 135: 6; Romans 9: 19

2) Daniel 4: 34, 35; Romans 8: 28; 11: 36; Ephesians 1: 11

3) Genesis 18: 25; James 1: 1; 1st John 1: 5

4) Genesis 50: 20; 2nd Samuel 24: 1; Isaiah 10: 5-7; Matthew 17: 12; John 19: 11; Acts 2: 23; Acts 4: 27, 28

Psalm 2: 1-9 – “Why do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing?” “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us.’ “He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision.” “Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: Yet I have set My king on My holy hill of Zion.” “I will declare the decree: the Lord has said to Me, You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” “Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.” “You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

John Gill says on verse 7: “It has respect to his person; for, as in human generation, person begets person, and like begets like, so in divine generation; but care must be taken to remove all imperfection from it, such as divisibility and multiplication of essence, priority and posteriority, dependence, and the like: nor can the “modus” or manner of it be conceived or explained by us. The date of it, “today”, designs eternity, as in Isaiah 43:13, which is one continued day, an everlasting now. (“Indeed before the day was, I am He; and there is no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?”) And this may be applied to any time and case in which Christ is declared to be the Son of God; as at His Incarnation, His Baptism, and Transfiguration upon the mount, and His resurrection from the dead, as it is in Acts 13: 33; because then he was declared to be the Son of God with power, Romans 1:4; and to His Ascension into heaven, where He was made Lord and Christ, and His Divine Sonship more manifestly appeared; which seems to be the time and case more especially referred to here, if it be compared with Hebrews chapter 1, verse 3.

1. What is a decree?

A. Answer – It is God’s plan, which He purposed before time began, in Himself.

It is His ordaining what, and in what way, all things shall come to pass.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it this way:

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.”

Question 8 – How doth God execute His Decrees?

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

In Creation:

Psalm 33: 6-8 – “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.” “he gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses.” “Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.” “For He spoke and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”

In Providence:

Psalm 33: 13-19 – “The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men.” “From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.” “No king is saved by the multitude of an army; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength.” “A horse is a vain hope for safety; neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.” “Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.”