

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 3, Paragraph 1 – “Of God’s Decree”,  
Message # 3 – Other Names for God’s Decree”, Presented in the  
Adult Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall,  
on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 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; 1<sup>st</sup> John 1: 5

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

5) Numbers 23: 19; Ephesians 1: 3-5

**Let’s look for a few minutes at the names that God’s decree is called in Scripture.**

**1. It is called – His counsel.**

**a. Why is it called a counsel?**

It is called a counsel because the Doctrine of the Decrees relates to counsel taken between the Persons of the Divine Trinity in eternity past concerning God’s creating all things for His glory, and especially all that He would do in relation to His creature man who would be created in His own image and likeness. Being eternal in Himself, God exists outside of time and yet He perfectly acts within it, decreeing all that will take place in time. In His counsel before time the Triune God planned all that would take place in time in relation to all that He would create and how His creation would come into being and be upheld from beginning to end, in relation to all people, all creatures and all things. Because He is infinitely wise in this counsel, He demonstrates to those who know Him His ability to righteously order everything for His own glory. In doing this He demonstrates His Goodness, His love, and His faithfulness to us who believe in Him, in accomplishing His decree.”

**Proverbs 8: 14-17** – “Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength.” “By me kings reign and rulers decree justice.” “By me princes rule, and nobles, all the judges of the earth.” “I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me.”

All of these verses here in Proverbs chapter 8 are talking about God’s wisdom personified. And God’s wisdom is Personified in the ultimate sense in God’s only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. In the first 11 verses of this chapter, we find wisdom crying out and understanding lifting up her voice, by the gates of the entrance to the city, at the the entrance of the doors. How can this be our Lord Jesus Christ who is speaking? Well, we should understand it in terms of His Bride, His Church, composed of all believers in Old Testament and New Testament times; those who have sought Him and found Him and now have His wisdom in their heart and life, helping them understand truth and giving them the ability to tell others around them what is wise to do according to God’s word; what to believe about God, and salvation, and how to live the Christian life. God alone is able to make you wise unto salvation, but He is also the one who gives wisdom,

understanding, and strength to rulers and kings and princes and nobles and judges of the earth, because He has decreed that it shall be so. It is a part of his eternal counsel.

## **2. It is called – His Purpose. Why is it called His purpose?**

**Because God is fully resolved to execute His purpose.**

**He does so in his works of Creation and Providence, and Redemption.**

**Isaiah 45: 11-13** – “Thus says the LORD, The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: ‘Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me.’ “I have made the earth, and created man on it.” “I – My hands – stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded.” “I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; He shall build My city And let My exiles go free, not for price nor reward,’ Says the LORD of hosts.”

**Now, you notice the definiteness of these statements of what God has decreed.** God declares to Israel because He is Holy One, and Israel’s Maker – Ask Me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of My hands, you command Me. In other words, The Triune God is directing them to pray and command Him in those prayers concerning the things that He has said will come to pass; things which are a part of His Divine Decree. The reason that the word “command” is used here is because the answers to the prayers commanded are already certain to come to pass, according to God’s decree, and therefore God would have His people pray for them. His hands laid the heavens and all the host of heaven. He sent His Son into the world, raised Him up in righteousness. He would direct Him in all of His ways. Christ by His finished work, would let God’s exiles; those banished and taken captive by sin and Satan, go free. He, the Lord Jesus Christ will build His Church, God’s city, and God would save them without money and without price. They would be saved not for anything that they could pay or do, but by Christ’s grace they would be saved.

**b. His counsel and purpose from all eternity includes the Counsel or Covenant of Redemption.** In this counsel, the Persons of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit thought eternal and unchangeable thoughts and made eternal and unchangeable plans to have an elect people whom God would redeem through our Lord Jesus Christ. His counsel was to sum up all things in Christ have chosen those particular persons in Christ from before the foundation of the world, having predestined them to adoption as sons, through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glory, and to the praise of His glorious grace.

**Ephesians 1: 3-11** – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in 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 predestined 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 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.”