

The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 3, Paragraph 1 – “Of God’s Decree”,
Message # 5 – “Times Determined by Decree”, Presented in the
Adult Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall,
on August 29th, 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

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

Paragraph 2 – “Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.”

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.”

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.

(I Add – And Redemption also, through our Lord Jesus Christ)

Job 14: 1-14 – “Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.” “He comes forth like a flower and fades away; He flees like a shadow and does not continue.” “And do You open Your eyes on such a one, and bring me to judgment with Yourself?” “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” “No one!” “Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.” “Look away from him that he may rest, Till like a hired man he finishes his day.” “For there is hope for a tree, If it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease.” “Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant.” “But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last and where is he?” “As water disappears from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dries up, so man lies down and does not rise.” “Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep.” “Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, that You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!” “If a

man dies, shall he live again?” “All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes.” “You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall (have) desire (to) the work of Your hands.”

Job knew that God has decreed all things in relation to every man. He knew that life was short and man is like a flower that fades away and a shadow that flees and does not continue. Job thought that God had brought him into judgment with Himself. He now saw himself as an unclean thing because of the things which had happened to him. And how could he be brought to be clean again? No man could do this.

Since his days were determined and the number of his months was **with God, he knew that God had** appointed his limits so that he could not pass **them**. He wanted God to look away from him so that he might rest, and ‘til like a hired man he would finish his day of life. He gives the illustration of a tree. If it is cut down, there is the hope that it will sprout again. Even though its root grows old in the earth, and the stump may die in the ground. But if it had the scent of water it would revive, and put forth shoots again.

Job was not smelling the scent of water from God. He says - If a man dies and **is** laid in the grave, where is he? Not in this life any longer. His body will lie there in the grave till the heavens are no more. He asks that he would be hid in the grave and that God would conceal **him until His wrath is past. He asks** that God would appoint him a set time and remember him.

Of course, God had already appointed this. He had already decreed it. Job would have to wait til his change came. But it would not be his death. His would be his deliverance from his trial. God would have desire for the work of His hands in Job.

2. Times related to nations and to Christ coming into the world to redeem God’s people.

Daniel 9: 20-27 – “Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.” “And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, ‘O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.’” “At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: ‘Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.’” “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.” “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” “The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.” “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.” “And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”

In these verses we see the certainty of God's decree in relation to His ancient people the Jews. 70 weeks were determined for Daniel's people it says in verse 24, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. The times leading from the rebuilding of the walls of the city of Jerusalem following the destruction of the 2nd temple until Christ's 2nd Coming and then on to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 a.d. are very precisely set forth, and have been confirmed in historic fulfillment. The weeks here mentioned are weeks, not of actual weeks, but they are weeks of years. In other words, 490 years are being spoken of here.

They were to know, therefore, and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there would first be seven weeks, that is from the decree of Artaxerxes in Nehemiah 1: 2, there would be the building of the city and the walls in 49 years amidst troublous times. And then there would follow this, sixty-two weeks more, or 483 years, which would bring the determined time down to the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry, he being the forerunner of Christ. (30 A.D.) This leaves one week remaining to be fulfilled, the 70 week. After the 69th week, Messiah would be cut off in the 70th week, but not for Himself.

That is, the Lord Jesus, as it says in verse 27 would confirm the New Covenant with many for one week. And in the midst of this week, in the middle of the 7 years, at the end of His 3 and a half year ministry, the Lord Jesus would cause the sacrifice and offering to cease, as it says there in verse 27, by confirming the New Covenant with many; by offering up of Himself on the cross for our sins. In doing this, He would bring the whole Mosaic sacrificial system to an end. He would entirely fulfill the righteous requirement of the moral law as well, and God would now be able to justify the many, as it says in Isaiah 53: 11 – "He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied." "By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities."

So, Christ would fulfill all righteousness by His own perfect obedience, and by His own sacrificial sufferings. He would bring in everlasting righteousness through His own finished work on the cross. He would make an end of our sins there. God the Father would then be able to make reconciliation for iniquity by His being raised from the dead for our justification. The other 3 and a half years of the 70 years were fulfilled in the apostles laying the foundation of the New Testament Church and the gospel going to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and beginning to go to the uttermost parts of the world.

This ministry and work of our Lord would be strenuously opposed by the scribes and Pharisees and rulers of Israel, by their putting their own Messiah to death, and calling for His blood to be upon their own heads. In doing this, they would bring down upon themselves as a nation, God's righteous wrath, which would come against them instrumentally from the "people of the prince who was to come"; that is, the Romans, who would send their general Titus down to destroy their city in 70 A.D. He would destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end of it would be with a flood of judgment, and til the end of that war, desolations were determined by God. These desolations did not end for the Jewish people after this war was fought and lost by them, but their desolations spiritually continue on to this day, as a people who do not know the Lord presently.

But thankfully, the time is also fixed for their future conversion to Christ, and their being brought into the Church, in a day to come. Romans 11: 26 – “And the Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

Now of this is what was decreed for them as a people. And the history of Christ’s Church is similarly set forth in the book of Revelation with the major times and seasons set forth there, as an outline of the History of the Church until the end of the world.