

Our basis of faith
WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH
Chapter 3
OF GOD'S ETERNAL DECREE

SECTION 1

God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass (Eph. 1:11, Rom 11:33, Heb. 6:17, Rom 9:15, 18); yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin (Jam 1:13,17, 1 John 1:5), nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established (Acts 2:23, Matt 17:12, Acts 4:27-28, John 19:11, Prov. 16:33).

SECTION 2

Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions (Acts 15:18, 1 Sam. 23:11-12, Matt. 11:21, 23); yet hath he not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions (Rom. 9:11, 13, 16, 18).

SECTION 3

By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels (1 Tim. 5:21, Matt. 25:41) are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death (Rom. 9:22-23, Eph. 1:5-6, Prov. 16:4).

SECTION 4

These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished (2 Tim. 2:19, John 13:18).

SECTION 5

Those of mankind that are predestinated unto 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 (Eph. 1:4, 9, 11, Rom 8:30, 2 Tim 1:9, 1 Thess. 5:9), out of his

mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto (Rom 9:11, 13, 16, Eph. 1:4, 9); and all to the praise of his glorious grace (Eph. 1:6, 12).

SECTION 6

As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto (1 Pet. 1:2, Eph. 1:4-5, Eph. 2:10, 2 Thess. 2:13,). Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ (1 Thess. 5:9-10, Tit 2:14); are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified (Rom. 8:30, Eph. 1:5, 2 Thess. 2:13), and kept by his power through faith unto salvation (1 Pet. 1:5). Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only (Rom. 8:28, John 17:9, John 6:64-65, John 10:26, 1 John 2:19).

SECTION 7

The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice (Matt. 11:25-26, Rom. 9:17, 18, 21, 22, 2 Tim. 2:19-20, Jude 4, 1 Pet. 2:8).

SECTION 8

The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care (Rom. 9:20, Rom. 11:33, Deut. 29:29), 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 (2 Pet. 1:10). So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God (Eph. 1:6, Rom. 11:33), and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.

Notes

Studying the Westminster Confession of Faith

Approaching the subject of God's eternal decree

God's eternal decree

Predestination

What about free will?

What difference does our predestination make?

- Awareness of the greatness of God
- Assurance of salvation
- Thanksgiving and praise for salvation
- Commitment to holiness
- Encouragement in evangelism

Our personal response