

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 3, Paragraph 1 – “Of God’s Decree”, Message # 24 –  
“The Means of Cleansing”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School Class  
by Pastor Paul Rendall, on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022.**

**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; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2: 13 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1: 2
- 2) 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5: 9 & 10 Titus 2: 14
- 3) Romans 8: 30 Ephesians 1: 5 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2: 13
- 4) 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1: 5
- 5) John 6: 64, 65 John 8: 47 John 10: 26 John 17: 9 Romans 8: 28 1<sup>st</sup> 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) 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 1: 4 & 5 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1: 10
- 3) Ephesians 1: 6 Romans 11: 33
- 4) Romans 11: 5, 6, & 20 Colossians 3: 12
- 5) 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1: 10
- 6) Luke 10: 20

**Thus far we have looked at the following Points concerning the Means that God uses to accomplish what He has decreed, concerning the salvation of His people.**

**1. God used the Means of Christ’s Prayers to accomplish His Purpose in regard to each and every person who is going to be saved, their being saved, and their being established in Him; to accomplish all that God has purposed for them.**

**2. The Means of the preaching of His word. This produces tangible results in the salvation and sanctification of God’s people according to His decreed purpose.**

**3. God uses the Means of Our Prayers in relation to fulfilling His own Purposes.**

**4. In our Progressive Sanctification God uses the Means of Believers cleansing themselves from all dishonorable thoughts and actions.**

**5. In our Progressive Sanctification God uses the means of cleansing ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6: 14 – 7: 1** – “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” “For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?” “And what communion has light with darkness?” “And what accord has Christ with Belial?” “Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?” “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?” “For you are the temple of the living God.” “As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them.’ “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” “Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.’ “Do not touch what is unclean,

and I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

To be unequally yoked together with unbelievers in the context here is to be spending a good portion of your time together with unbelievers; those people who are walking in the darkness of sin and in the deception of false religion. Having “fellowship”, “communion”, “accord”, and “a part” with such people will grieve the Holy Spirit, because bad company corrupts good morals. In that day, it would mean going to the temples of the false gods and thinking that it would not affect your relationship with Christ. In our day, it would mean regularly hanging around with people who hold to false doctrine or sinful practices.

The separation being talked about here is to come out from among these people who have compromised morals, who profess to be Christians. We should guard ourselves from idolatry and immorality.

Although the Corinthian believers did know God as their Father, verse 18 says that God would be a Father to them and reckon them among His sons and daughters if they would repent of all compromise with false religion and worldly sinful practices. He would own them for His children. Ultimately, persons who claim to be Christians and will not separate themselves from these false religious views, worldly sinful practices, God will not own them as His own children, for we are called to holiness. We cannot practice sin and maintain that we are Christians.

It is the personal responsibility of every Christian, having been given such great promises of spiritual blessing from God, to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit. Cleansing from the defilement of the flesh relates to everything that defiles the body in food and drink and all outward sins such as earthly mindedness, worldly lusts such as pride in its outward manifestation in the way that we speak or act, outbursts of anger, foul language, and other deeds of the flesh as mentioned in Galatians 5. Sins which defile the the spirit would include unclean sexual thoughts, envy, hatred, jealousy, envy, and covetousness.

The way that we perfect holiness is in the fear of the Lord. We have regard to Him and to His word, to do what He commands us, not because we are afraid of Him, but because we love Him and long to be able to better do what He commands us. If we are afraid, we are afraid that we are not paying close enough attention to what He has said in His word, to do it. We may think that we are falling short of His glory, and not being careful enough to stay on the path of righteousness. We may think that we are not walking worthy of all that Christ has done for us. This kind of fear is a holy fear, and we should walk in it all the day long.

## **6. God uses the means of our cleansing ourselves from the defilements of flesh and spirit to perfect holiness, and this brings to us assurance of hope in relation to our salvation.**

**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.

It is mentioned here in paragraph 7 as – “being assured of our eternal election”.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1: 5-11** – “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.” “For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.” “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

