

Section: Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology)

Lesson 68 - Questions 77,78,79

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**TEACHING NOTES**

**Intro: “Part 8: Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology)”**

Tonight, is our first lesson in the next section of our catechism.

This section is Part 8, and is called *Doctrine of Salvation*.

This means we are focusing on questions like…

How can a person be saved / How does God save a person / Who does He save / Why does He save anyone?

The doctrine of Salvation is one of THE most important doctrines we MUST get right.

Understanding who God is and then How, WHO and WHY He saves is so fundamental to our understanding of the gospel and our implementation of our worship!!

The problem is, there is a tendency *in our flesh* to lean too hard on human rationale or feelings *instead* of the authority of the eternal holy word of God.

As a result, many people and likely many of you in the room, Including me at one point in my faith journey form or hold views of *who God is* and *how He acts* (or doesn’t act) based more on our personal feelings or human logic instead of the revelation He gave us in Scripture.

But, if we are to be faithful Christians, we need to acknowledge the full authority of the Bible—the full authority of what God has said about all things—and submit to God, conforming to His image—*not* trying to make Him conform to our ideas.

Now, we have studied some of these salvation elements so far in the catechism, but there are more elements that need to be taught from Scripture and so this section of the catechism is specifically focused on **salvation.**

**A right view of Soteriology shapes so much about how we view and worship God and testify of His life-changing gospel to others.**

This is really important ESPECIALLY tonight as we tackle the doctrine of Election.

For many this can be one of if not the hardest reformed doctrines to get on board with.

But by God’s grace a humble and faithful study of God’s word will bring you to the sweet place of seeing just how must God’s word teaches this and just how good it is!! By God’s grace you will join so many of us who at one time stood in rejection of the ***God who chooses*** and now **worship the God who chooses!!**

Let’s begin by getting familiar with our first of tonight’s three catechism questions,

**Q77. Why did God ordain creation and the plan of salvation?**

God ordained creation and the plan of salvation for the display of His glory, highlighting especially His grace and power.

We’ve covered the focus of this first question in previous lessons, but before we get into how God saves, it is important to **remember** why God ordained creation and the plan of salvation.

The Bible says that **ALL of creation exists to glorify God.**

God is perfect, and all He does is first and foremost for His name and glory.

As we’ve learned, *if God were to put anything above Himself,* ***He would not be ultimate; He would not be perfect*.**

We need to remind ourselves that Scripture teaches the primary reason that God is, and acts, and saves is in accordance with His will and *ultimately* for His sake and His glory, and not ours.

**Romans 11:36** For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

We see an example of this in:

**Ezekiel 36:22**  “…Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name…”

**Why did God ordain creation and the plan of salvation?**

…*For the display of His glory, highlighting especially His grace and power.*

Creation is God’s creation.

God owns everything and as Owner-Creator, He may do what He wills with creation.

Everything that exists, including our lives, exists ultimately for the glory of God.

***Creation exist to put on display the attributes of God that they may be worshipped and adored!***

Our answer says, God ordained creation and the plan of salvation for the display of His glory, ***highlighting especially His grace and power.***

Paul speaks to this in Romans 9 when he says,

**Romans 9:16-17a** So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up….

God created Pharoah and rose him to power. Think about that. Pharoah was the most dominate leader in all the world at that time and one of the most wicked proponents of idolatry and false worship. Think of all the little “g” gods that they worshipped in Egypt.

But God creates and rises Pharoah to power. **WHY?**

…that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”

**Romans 9:17b**

God’s sovereign work in the exodus to deliver his little Israelite people from the hand of Pharoah was one of the most talked about and revered marks of history in all the world for generations.

God ordained creation and the plan of salvation for the display of His glory, ***highlighting especially His grace and power.***

In the next verses of Romans 9, Paul continues to make it clear that God, the creator of all things, who he refers to as the Potter, has every right to do with the clay what He wills. LISTEN…

**Romans 9:19-23** You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” 20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? 22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—

Then he talks about creating some who would remain guilty in their sin and be worthy of God’s wrath and make known His power!! And some whom God would show mercy and grace to and save unto eternal life with Him.

So **do you see the details in our catechism answer for Q77?**

God ordained creation and the plan of salvation for the display of His glory, ***highlighting especially His grace and power.***

God is truly worthy to be praised by His creation for all of his glorious and eternal attributes! AMEN

Ok.. look with me at the meat of tonight’s lesson .. Q78 & 79.

**Q78. Who will be saved?**

Only those whom God has chosen for salvation—the elect—will be saved.

**Q79. When did God choose individuals for salvation?**

Based on His will alone, in love, God chose and predestined each of the elect before creation.

**These answers speak to the fundamental Christian doctrines of *Election* and *Predestination*.**

To help our study, let’s slow and read our definitions of these two doctrines.

(\*These definitions are on the pages of these catechism questions and also in the glossary in the back of the book.) Our first definition is:

**Unconditional Individual Election:** Before creation existed, God chose which individual human beings would receive salvation from sin, death, and God’s eternal wrath. This choice to redeem certain ones is not based on any so-called goodness, will, or work in them; rather, it is based on the freedom and grace of God in Christ Jesus alone.

Our second definition is:

**Predestination**: In love, based on the perfect will of the Triune God, the destiny of salvation unto eternal life for God’s chosen people was planned and ordained from start to end before creation began. Predestination is not based on foreseen deeds or faith in anyone; it is based on God’s will alone.

It is helpful to see how these are two distinct sides of the same coin.

Before creation, God chose *who* specifically He would save from all of humanity, and this choice was *unto salvation*; the choice was made in such a way that *destined* these individuals for sure salvation: eternal life in blessed communion with God.

Unconditional Individual Election highlights *the choosing of specific persons* based on *God’s will alone*.

And Predestination highlights that the *destiny of salvation unto eternal life* was planned and ordained for this elected—this chosen people—*before time began*.

Now, before we move on, see that there are two important descriptors that precede the word ***Election*** which are: “Unconditional” & “Individual”.

Consider them briefly with me…

* Unconditional means there are no conditions and were no conditions **in a person** that influenced or caused this choice of God. As our definition clear says, “This choice to redeem certain ones is not based on any so-called goodness, will, or work in them; rather, it is based on the freedom and grace of God in Christ Jesus alone.”
* Individual is in our term because God sovereignly choses *specific individuals*, loving them *in a personal way*. The elect are **not** a particular group (such as a national or ethnic group) and they are not haphazardly or indifferently chosen. Rather, the elect consist of actual persons from all tribes, tongues, and nations, who were known by God, and in time, sought, *and brought into the unified body of Christ* because of God’s eternal love for each of them individually and them being individually chosen by God before time began.

While Holy Scripture clearly teaches Unconditional Individual Election in many ways and places, Paul speaks to both of these very specifically in one place found in **Romans 9:6-13**…

**Romans 9:6-8** For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, 7 and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” 8 This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.

Paul is making an important point here to say that God’s elect are not the OT Covenant people of Israel as a nation. Some of the OT Covenant people of Israel are a part of God’s elect but not all of ethnic Israel. Not all the children of the flesh but the children of the promise. The promise to save God’s elect. Those individuals who God choose before time and came to save through Christ.

**Romans 9:9-13** For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” 10 And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, 11 though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— 12 she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” 13 As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

Even though Jacob and Esau had not yet been born and have not done anything good or bad yet…

God chose one and hated the other. Jacob was God’s elect and Esau was not.

Paul says here very specifically, God did this so that His “purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls”

Not because of anything they did or would do, but because of God who has the utter right to choose whom he wills!!

Church, to argue against God’s right to elect… his right to choose is to argue against God!!

It is to try to fit God into our box and to reason in our finite minds how it works or should be.

This is arrogance at its best. Instead may we humble ourselves and submit to God’s revealed will as to how he has chosen to do these things with his creation!

Before we look to one of the very best places we see God’s electing and predestination in Ephesians 1 consider with me a number of other places we see in both the OT and NT that God is a God who chooses and not one who leaves it up to us!!

**Examples of Election in the OT:**

Out of all the people in the world, God chose Abraham and made him the father of a great nation called Israel. That's why under the Old Covenant the people of Israel are called, **"His chosen ones." Psalm 105:43**

**Deuteronomy 7:6** “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.  **(cf. Duet. 14:2)**

The Lord choose a people for His own possession out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth. And God said it wasn't because they were better than any other people, it wasn't because they were more attractive than any other people. God said it was because of His own free predetermined will to set His love upon them and for no other reason.

God created and choose Adam to be mankind’s Federal head

God choose Pharoah to be the world leader he became

God choose Moses to be the one to lead his Old Covenant people out of Egypt.

God choose the youngest son of Jesse, David, to be the King of Israel.

And on and on…

**Examples of Election in the NT:**

**The angel of the Lord said that John the Baptist would be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb. (Luke 1:15c)**

This is a beautiful sign of the unconditional individual election of God to choose John before he had done anything good or bad, like Jacob, to be his chosen one!!

In the New Testament, the redeemed are those who were **“chosen of God”** (Col. 3:12; cf. 1 Cor. 1:27; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1; 2:9; 5:13; Rev. 17:14), meaning that the church is a community of those who were chosen, or “elect”.

When Jesus told His disciples, “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. (John 15:16),

In his letters to the Thessalonians, Paul reminds his readers that indeed God has chosen them and that he was thankful for them “because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation”.

**1 Thess 1:4**  For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you

**2 Thess 2:13**  But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

In 2 Tim 2, Paul talks about suffering hardship like a good soldier of Jesus Christ, he competes in verse 5 like an athlete, strenuously. He works in verse 6 like a hard-working farmer.

In verse 9 he talks about suffering hardship, even to imprisonment as a criminal.

Why does he do this? He answers in verse 10.

**2 Timothy 2:10** Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

**Who are the ones that will believe in Jesus for salvation?** Those who were appointed (or elect).

**Act 13:48** And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

**Matthew 22:14** For many are called, but few are chosen.

Many are called...there is a wide, general gospel call (the preaching of the Gospel.. the call by preachers to Repent and Believe…) but few are chosen.

In **Romans 8:33** Paul says, "Who will bring a charge against God's elect?"

God is the one who justifies and if God declares that we are righteous before Him, no one can successfully bring an accusation against His elect.

With many of those examples under our feet, let’s turn to Ephesians 1 together and see the marvelous work of God’s unconditional individual election that he made before time for His glory…

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

(Pause for a moment, let’s be sure to note WHO is being spoken of here.

The pronoun is “us.” Paul is writing to the Christians in Ephesus *about being “the elect”*.

**Ephesians 1:4** even as he [God] **chose** us [the elect] in him **before the foundation of the world** that we should be holy and blameless before him.

**Who did the choosing?** **God, HE CHOSE US**.

**And when did He make this choice?** **Before the foundation of the world:** in eternity past, before the fall, before creation!

**Ephesians 1:4c-5** In love **5**he [God] **predestined** us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will

Here is one of our key terms for this lesson: ***predestined***.

You know what predestined means by now. It means a person’s destiny is determined beforehand: before creation, before the fall, before we were born and had done anything good or bad*, God predestined us*—the chosen ones, the elect.

He predestined us…. for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will

God determined who would be saved—*His choice*, it was His plan by His will, His decree…all of this is according to the purpose of His will.

**Ephesians 1:6** to the praise of his glorious grace

(God saves His elect for the ultimate “*praise of his glorious grace*.”

As one of our catechism answers says, God works as He does *for the display of His glory*.

The passage goes on to explain many layers of the blessing of the redemption/salvation the elect are predestined unto.

**Ephesians 1:7-11** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

**Come on, if that doesn’t teach you plainly and clearly when, who, and why God chose to save, we’ve got some serious issues. It’s all laid out by Paul here so clearly.**

Let’s see another NT passage. Look with me at…

**2 Timothy 1:8-9 (NASB)** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, **9**who has saved **us** (Pause…Once again, the pronoun “us” refers to the saved elect. So, God has saved US…)

and *called* us with a holy calling, not according to *our* works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus *from all eternity*

The KJV says,” before the world began”

The NIV says “before the beginning of time”

And the ESV says “before the ages began”

**So when did God choose whom he will save? When did God choose the ELECT?**

**Ephesians 1:4**  “**before the foundation of the world”**

**2 Timothy 1:9 “before time”**

Revelation 13 and 17 speak of the names of the ELECT are written in the “**the Lamb’s book of life”**

Listen…

**Revelation 13:7- 8** It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—**all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.**

**Revelation 17:8** The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth **whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world** will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

**When were the names written in the book of life?** **“From the foundation of the world”**

**If you are of God’s chosen ones, your name was unchangeably written in Christ’s book of salvation before the foundation of the world!** That is an awesome and comforting truth!

**Paul says in..**

**2 Timothy 1:9** He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. **This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time**

Back to the definition of ***predestination*:**

“In love, based on the perfect will of the Triune God, the destiny of salvation unto eternal life for God’s chosen people was planned and ordained from start to end before creation began…”

* **God Had Paul Address the Objection of our flesh**

Now, in our flesh, some may not see this as good news.

There is a common objection by many to the doctrine of predestination and or election among many who will even claim to trust Jesus and or by many preachers who are charged to faithfully preach God’s word.

As we are all well aware of, mankind has a misguided claims to a sense of autonomy and a humanistic sense of fairness by which we reason that God must operate if he is to be loving.

In light of this common wrestle of our flesh, God ordained for Paul to address the common objection to the truth of God’s sovereignty in salvation in Romans 9:19-24.

When speaking about God’s practice of choosing or electing whom he will save, Paul says..

**Romans 9:19** You will say to me then, “Why does he [God] still find fault? For who can resist his [God’s] will?”

Paul’s readers have just heard His teaching on election and they understand what is being taught: God chose who He would give saving grace to, *by His will alone*–that is, election and predestination.

Paul knows they might ask, “So with that being the case, how is it right for God to hold those accountable whom he didn’t choose to save?”

And to this question, Paul could go into a variety of reasons why it is **just** for God to do this.

But God ordained for Paul to write…the humbling truth that *we are finite created beings,* ***not capable of or worthy of questioning the Creator and His right to ordain what he will for His Creation****.*

*Paul replies…*

**Romans 9:20-21** But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

God has Paul give the kind of response we really don’t like, even in other situations.

Even when it’s true, we humans usually don’t like it when an employer tells a worker, “Because I have the authority to say so or do so.”

Or a husband to say to a wife, “Because I have the authority to say so or do so.”

Or a mother to say to her child, “Because I have the authority to say so or do so.”

Or a police officer to say to a criminal, “Because I have the authority to say so or do so.”

Our flesh, young or old, doesn’t like this kind of response. **WHY?**

SIN!... we’re too prideful, we are too self-seeking.

Even when we know that it’s factually correct, we don’t like the “because I have the authority to say so or do so” kind of answer.

But it is the right answer in many cases.

And, so it is with God.

Better said, it is right so much more with God!

God’s position and ways should never be questioned or doubted as WRONG. For God can do no wrong. He is righteous in all that he does!!

***Who are you, O man—o finite man, o created man, o sinful man—who are you to question the perfect, holy, righteous God?***

Oh how we need humility!!

To be corrected this way should be very humbling. I hope you can accept God’s word on this.

*Humble willingness to conform our minds and hearts around God’s truths is critically important.*

It is the way of true Christianity. Not to make Christianity what we want it to be but to joyfully submit to the way God declares it to be.

**Proverbs 29:23 (NASB)** A man’s pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor.

**James 4:6-7** … “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” **7** Submit yourselves therefore to God…

**James 4:10** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

I pray this is where you are in these things and in all study of God’s word.

God’s answer to pushback questions of Him or objecting to His ways of working *is for us to be humbled—to remember who we are in relation to Him*. He is Creator, we are created. He has full rights over us. He has decreed and He acts wisely and righteously.

I pray you remember that as you continue on the lifelong journey in your fallen flesh, seeking to know and honor God *in truth*.

**Turn with me to Romans 8 for another beautiful insight into this sovereign work of God**

**Romans 8:28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

(Pause for a moment. Note that again Paul affirms the saved, those who love God, *are* ***called*** according to **God’s** purpose—that is His plan/decree. His intention is for the believer who has been saved by God’s sovereign grace to have comfort and security because GOD sovereignly elected and subsequently saved you!

**Romans 8:29-30** For those whom he [God] foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **30**And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

This is a beautiful passage. God is doing an unbreakable, unchangeable work in each of the elect. For our purposes tonight, see that it’s

God who did the foreknowing of those specific individuals,

God who did the predestining of those chosen ones,

God who does the effectual calling of the chosen ones,

God who does the justifying of the chosen ones,

and God who does the glorifying of the chosen ones.

*All of this is dependent upon God*, not man or any other thing else, outside of God.

* + **Rightly Understanding “Foreknew”**

Let’s focus for a bit on a certain term we see here in this passage, that is, “foreknew.”

This term has been greatly misunderstood and, by some, even twisted to support an **un**biblical idea that I’ll discuss in a moment. But first let us understand what this term *actually* means.

In Scripture, the words "know/knew" and "foreknow/foreknew" *sometimes* mean "choose" or "set favor upon" or "intimately loved."

And such is the case in this passage.

Based on how the words "know/knew" and "foreknow/foreknew" are sometimes used in Scripture and based on who God is, how He makes decrees, and how He works, we know that the word foreknew here means: *chose (elected) in love*. God has had eternal love for specific individuals, and this is an *electing love* that equaled them being *predestined unto salvation*.

We see this here and we saw this in Ephesians 1, remember? “[God] chose us in him before the foundation of the world…*In love*[God] predestined us for adoption as sons,…redemption,…forgiveness of our trespasses…”

“He foreknew” in Romans 8 means “He lovingly chose” … “He lovingly elected.” God has had eternal, sovereign love for specific individuals and this was an electing love that equaled them being predestined unto salvation.

This election was decreed before creation and was **not** based on any foreseen faith or so-called good deeds in any humans, rather it is based on God’s will alone.

For further study later, if you wish, since we don’t have time in this lesson, I have included in your notes a list of some texts to show this type of word usage in Scripture. In the passages listed you can see how know/knowing/knew/foreknew is used as a version of chose or elected: Romans 11:1–2; Amos 3:1–2; Genesis 18:17–19; Hosea 13:4–5; Matthew 7:23; 1 Corinthians 8:3; 2 Timothy 2:16–19

Now, let’s address the unbiblical idea some have about this word “foreknew” in Romans 8.

The misunderstanding of the word asserts ***that God looked into the future to observe the actions of humans, saw and learned who would choose Him, and in response to that He affirmed who would be saved and decreed such things to happen.***

This unbiblical idea means the choice wasn’t first or truly God’s to make; the choice to elect persons was *dependent* upon God learning about the future actions of humans and basing His decree and actions upon that information.

Now, you may immediately see the **numerous** biblical problems with that *or* you may be thinking that may have some merit.

Let us consider why that idea is completely impossible and **categorically unbiblical**. (What I’ll say to this is only some of the many ways we can see this how unbiblical this idea is.)

As an aside, know that historically, faithful theologians of old, have denounced this false view. For example, the 1689 Confession of Faith says **“[God’s] decree of anything is not based on foreseeing it in the future.”**

Biblically we know that, before creation existed—before any humans were alive, before any angels existed, before there was anything made that was made—*God was*.

We’ve studied this in our catechism journey. God is eternal. God is timeless, having always existed. And in this eternal existence before anything was created, God has been the same all-powerful, all-wise, all-sovereign God that He has always been.

Now, relevant to the point we are addressing is the fact that God is eternally omniscient. The definition of God’s **omniscience** is, “God has perfect, complete knowledge. He never learns, nor does He forget. He knows all things that exist and all things that could have existed. God cannot grow in knowledge, understanding, or wisdom.”

That is because in Himself, God has always had pure and complete knowledge. This is very important. The unbiblical idea of God looking into the future before creation to see who would chose Him requires God to learn something. This is categorically impossible.

Very much related to this is our definition of God’s **wisdom**; it says: “God possesses wisdom perfectly and has decidedly ordained all things perfectly, including the best ways to accomplish His decisions.”

You can see how this relates. His wisdom and knowledge go hand in hand; He knows all, and He has ordained all that comes to pass. God knows all because He has ordained all that comes to pass.

Once again, we see the idea of Him choosing people because they chose Him is unbiblical. As we’ll learn about in the coming weeks, a person can only have saving faith in Jesus because God first chose him/her (before time began) and then, in time, God causes him/her to have this faith. Biblically, this order cannot be altered.

Very much related to this is our definition of **God’s sovereignty: “All things are under God’s rule and control, and nothing happens without His direction.**

God’s Providence means, God works, not just some things, but all things after the counsel of His own holy will.

God's purpose is all-inclusive and is never thwarted.

 It is not merely that God has the power and right to govern all things but that He does so always and without exception. God is the Supreme Being who answers to no one and who has the absolute right to do with His creation as He desires.” God is eternally sovereign.

**Isaiah 46:9-10** … for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, **10**declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose’

The historic 1689 Confession of Faith we hold to states this point like this: “God has decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass.”

Therefore, the reality of someone believing is because God decreed it *apart from any foreseen faith or so-called good deeds in any humans*. He has ordained all that comes to past in Himself—by His will—not subject to of affected by anything outside of Him.

And, additionally relevant to the point we are addressing is the fact that God is eternally immutable. The definition God’s **immutability** is, “God, in His being, perfections, purposes, ordinations, and promises, does not change in any way. He has always been and will always be exactly the same.”

This is relevant also because we see that God’s eternal choice in eternity past didn’t come about by learning or seeing something outside of Him; rather, He made His eternal choice based on His omniscience, wisdom, sovereignty, etc., and this choice is unchanging. It cannot change because God cannot change.

The number of the elect does not/cannot increase or decrease. Those, and only those, whom God chose before time began will be saved.

God has ordained/decreed all that comes to pass. This is His creation; we live in God’s world. He owns all things, and He has determined, before creation began, all that will come about.

We learned these things from Scripture in our catechism journey so far; none of this should be new information for us who have been here.

We cannot reject who God is, how He makes decrees, and how He works in order to accept an idea that seems more palatable to us or others.

Let’s begin to close out our lesson with some important application.

* **Application**

**How do we rest in the fact that God chooses some to be saved by His grace unto eternal life and others to remain in their sin guilt to receive his eternal wrath, especially when it comes to people we dearly love like parents, siblings or children?**

This is a question I have personally wrestled with and surely talked out with many over my many years of studying and preaching God’s word. The answer lies in what is most important to me.

If my parents, siblings, children are most important to me then I will reject or be gravely offended that God would not save those that I love. \*Pastor Ron Vietti of Valley Bible Church, one of the largest churches in our city, once said and I quote, “If I thought my kid wasn’t chosen and I thought he was going to hell, you know what I would do is say to God if it’s ok I am going to hell with my kid”

Church, understand that this is Idolatry at its best. A pastor who says I love my child and I am willing to burn in hell with them if it means rejecting a God who chooses.

Church, nothing in this creation can be more important to us then God!!

All of this creation belongs to him and exist for his glory. That means, my life and my dearly beloved families life exist to glorify God.

Church this is how we have true peace in whether or not our loved one is elect or not.

Because God will be glorified either way!! God will be glorified for his grace for those whom he has saved to glory and God will be glorified for his justice and his wrath over people who are guilty in their sin.

I have rest, I have true peace because the ultimate longing of my heart, the greatest desire of my life is for God to be glorified. And I can trust God’s election of some and not all because in all God will be glorified. Salvation doesn’t belong to me and my loved ones destiny is not the ultimate hope of my heart or reason for my living. It is God’s glory!! AMEN.

CHURCH, this is where we must resolve. And any affection, allegiance, and love for God’s created that is greater than God himself is sin and needs to be repented of!!

**Romans 9:20-23** But who are you, O man, to answer back to God?

Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?”

21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—

**Q77. Why did God ordain creation and the plan of salvation?**

God ordained creation and the plan of salvation for the display of His glory, highlighting especially His grace and power.

Application number 2… **“How Do I Know If I Am Elect?”**

To this we must see that the answer is actually fairly simple, that is: **you know who the elect are because they have saving faith in Jesus**!

True saving faith only exists in those God has chosen, and subsequently gifted saving faith to.

So, **do *you* have saving faith in Jesus?**

If so, then you should take comfort in your God as one of His elect.

But those who do not claim to trust in Christ or do not have a credible profession of faith should not presume to be of God’s elect. It also doesn’t mean you are not of God’s elect either.

It could be God’s holy will to save you later in life.

But, as long as a person does not have saving faith in God there should be no confidence that they are saved or will be saved.

Salvation belongs to the Lord. But we can be assured of this, God will save ALL OF HIS ELECT and lose none of those He has saved!! AMEN!

**John 6:39** Jesus said, “And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.”

All those who truly trust in Jesus alone show that God has eternally loved them, chosen them before time began, and that Jesus died to save them! How amazing!

Application number 3… **How does the fact that God chooses affect our efforts of Evangelism?**

If God has planned an unchanging decree to save a chosen people, then we get to go out into this world and speak the good news of Jesus without any lack of hope because we know that God will save ALL His chosen people.

We also know that God has called and commissioned us to testify the gospel as a means that He will use to save those He has chosen to save!!

Church this is why we do evangelism with great confidence! Confidence—not in ourselves, but in our God. God has the plan and power to change hearts. He will do what He has decreed.

We must go with confidence and tell others about the God who saves people from sin by the person and work of Jesus Christ, let’s call them to repent and trust in Jesus.

Knowing about election and predestination should put loving boldness in our heart to evangelize. WHY? **Because Our God saves!**

To close our time, I want to read with you a portion of the historic confession, for you to see these marvelous things spoken of by theologians before us and for you to be encouraged in walking in step with this core Christian teaching:

1689 Confession of Faith: By God’s decree, and for the demonstration of his glory, some human beings and angels are predestined (or foreordained) to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace. Others are left to live in their sin, leading to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice.

These predestined and foreordained angels and people are individually and unchangeably designated, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or decreased.

Those people who are predestined to life were chosen by God before the foundation of the world, according to his eternal and unchangeable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will. He chose them in Christ for eternal glory, purely as a result of his free grace and love, without anything else about them serving as a condition or cause moving him to do so.

Just as God has appointed the elect to glory, so he has by the eternal and completely free purpose of his will foreordained all the means. Therefore, those who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ and effectually called to faith in Christ by his Spirit working at the appropriate time. They are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith to salvation. No one but the elect are redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved.

The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care so that those heeding the will of God revealed in his Word and obeying him may be assured of their eternal election by the certainty of their effectual calling. In this way this doctrine will give reasons for praise, reverence, and admiration of God, as well as humility, diligence and rich comfort to all who sincerely obey the gospel.

Remember our first catechism Q/A tonight:

**Q77. Why did God ordain creation and the plan of salvation?**

God ordained creation and the plan of salvation for the display of His glory, highlighting especially His grace and power.

All things, including election/predestination and reprobation, are for His glory.

**Romans 11:36** For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Let’s pray.