

LESSON 5:

How is Christ's Work Able to Apply to Us?

Summary

Without a full biblical understanding of how salvation works, the natural human tendency is to assume that it applies to us by inspiration or by the affirmation of faith. Our salvation, however, was ordained by the Triune God from all eternity in His foreknowledge of His people and His predestination and election of them unto Christ. Our union with Christ, therefore, is of central importance in our salvation.

REQUIRED READINGS

WCF ch. 3, "Of God's Eternal Decree," WLC 12-14, WSC 7-8

WCF ch. 8 "Of Christ the Mediator," WLC 36-57, WSC 21-28

FOR FURTHER READING

John Murray, "Chapter 9 - Union with Christ," in *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1955),. 161-173

How Did God Decide Upon Our Salvation? (WCF 3)

Westminster Confession of Faith	
CHAPTER III – <i>Of God's Eternal Decree</i>	
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: ^(a) yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, ^(b) nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established. ^(c)	
^(a) Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:15, 18; Rom. 11:33; Heb. 6:17	^(c) Acts 2:23; Matt. 17:12; Acts 4:27-28; John 19:11;
^(b) James 1:13-14; 1 John 1:5	Prov. 16:33
2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, ^(a) yet has He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions. ^(b)	
^(a) 1 Sam. 23:11-12; Matt. 11:21, 23	^(b) Rom. 9:11, 13, 16, 18
3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels ^(a) are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death. ^(b)	
^(a) 1 Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:31, 41	^(b) Eph. 1:5-6; Rom. 9:22-23; Prov. 16:4

4. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished. ^(a)

(a) John 13:18; 2 Tim. 2:19; John 10:14-16, 27-28; 17:2, 6, 9-12

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, has chosen, in Christ, unto everlasting glory, ^(a) 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: ^(b) and all to the praise of His glorious grace. ^(c)

(a) Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:9 (c) Eph. 1:6, 12

(b) Rom. 9:11, 13, 15-16; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11

6. As God has appointed the elect unto glory, so has He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. ^(a) Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, ^(b) are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, ^(c) and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. ^(d) Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only. ^(e)

(a) 1 Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:4-5; Eph. 2:10; 2 Thess. 2:13

(d) 1 Pet. 1:5

(b) 1 Thess. 5:9-10; Tit. 2:14

(e) John 10:14-15, 26; John 6:64-65; Rom. 8:28-39;

(c) Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:5; 2 Thess. 2:13

John 17:9; John 8:47; 1 John 2:19

7. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extends or withholds mercy, as He pleases, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath, for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice. ^(a)

(a) (Matt. 11:25-26; Rom. 9:17-18, 21-22; Jude 4; 1 Pet. 2:8; 2 Tim. 2:19-20)

8. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, ^(a) 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. ^(b) So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, ^(c) and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel. ^(d)

(a) Rom. 9:20; Rom. 11:33; Deut. 29:29

(c) Eph. 1:6; Rom. 11:33

(b) 2 Pet. 1:10

(d) Rom. 11:5-6, 20; Rom. 8:33; Luke 10:20; 2 Pet. 1:10

How Did God Decide Upon Our Salvation? (WCL 12-14, WSC 7-8)

Westminster Larger Catechism	Westminster Shorter Catechism
<p>Question 12</p> <p>Q. <i>What are the decrees of God?</i></p> <p>A. God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, ^(a) whereby, from all eternity, he has, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, ^(b) especially concerning angels and men.</p> <p>(a) Eph. 1:11, Rom. 11:33, Rom. 9:14-15, 18</p> <p>(b) Eph. 1:4,11, Rom. 9:22-23, Ps. 33:11</p>	<p>Question 7</p> <p>Q. <i>What are the decrees of God?</i></p> <p>A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. ^(a)</p> <p>(a) Eph. 1:4,11, Rom. 9:22-23</p>
<p>Question 13</p> <p>Q. <i>What has God especially decreed concerning angels and men?</i></p> <p>A. God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, has elected some angels to glory; ^(a) and in Christ has chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof: ^(b) and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will, (whereby he extends or withholds favor as he pleases,) has passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice. ^(c)</p> <p>(a) 1 Tim. 5:21</p> <p>(b) Eph. 1:4-6, 2 Thess. 2:13-14</p> <p>(c) Rom. 9:17-18,21-22, Matt. 11:25-26, 2 Tim. 2:20, Jude 4, 1 Pet. 2:8</p>	
<p>Question 14</p> <p>Q. <i>How does God execute his decrees?</i></p> <p>A. God executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will. ^(a)</p> <p>(a) Eph. 1:11</p>	<p>Question 8</p> <p>Q. <i>How does God execute his decrees?</i></p> <p>A. God executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence.</p>

How is Christ Central to Our Salvation? (WCF 8)

Westminster Confession of Faith

CHAPTER VIII – *Of Christ the Mediator*

1. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man, ^(a) the Prophet ^(b), Priest ^(c), and King ^(d), the Head and Savior of His Church ^(e), the Heir of all things ^(f), and Judge of the world ^(g); unto whom He did from all eternity give a people, to be His seed ^(h), and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified ⁽ⁱ⁾.

(a) Isa. 42:1; 1 Pet. 1:19–20; John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:5

(f) Heb. 1:2

(b) Acts 3:20, 22; Deut. 18:15

(g) Acts 17:31

(c) Heb. 5:5–6

(h) John 17:6; Ps. 22:30; Isa. 53:10; Eph. 1:4

(d) Ps. 2:6; Luke 1:33; Isa. 9:5–6; Acts 2:29–36; Col. 1:13

(i) 1 Tim. 2:6; Isa. 55:4–5; 1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 8:30

(e) Eph. 5:23

2. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature ^(a), with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin ^(b): being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance ^(c). So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion ^(d). Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man ^(e).

(a) John 1:1, 14; 1 John 5:20; Phil. 2:6; Gal. 4:4

(d) Luke 1:35; Matt. 16:16; Col. 2:9; Rom. 9:5; 1 Pet. 3:18;

(b) Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14, 16–17; Heb. 4:15

1 Tim. 3:16

(c) Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Gal. 4:4; Matt. 1:18, 20–21

(e) Rom. 1:3–4; 1 Tim. 2:5

3. The Lord Jesus, in His human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, above measure ^(a); having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge ^(b); in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell ^(c); to the end that, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth ^(d), He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety ^(e). Which office He took not unto Himself but was thereunto called by His Father ^(f), who put all power and judgment into His hand, and gave Him commandment to execute the same ^(g).

(a) Ps. 45:7; John 3:34; Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18; Heb. 1:8–9

(e) Acts 10:38; Heb. 12:24; Heb. 7:22

(b) Col. 2:3

(f) Heb. 5:4–5

(c) Col. 1:19

(g) John 5:22, 27; Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36

(d) Heb. 7:26; John 1:14

4. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake ^(a); which that He might discharge, He was made under the law ^(b), and did perfectly fulfill it ^(c); endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul ^(d), and most painful sufferings in His body ^(e); was crucified, and died ^(f); was buried, and remained under the power of death; yet saw no corruption ^(g). On the third day He arose from the dead ^(h), with the same body in which He suffered ⁽ⁱ⁾, with which also He ascended into heaven, and there sits at the right hand of His Father ^(j), making intercession ^(k), and shall return, to judge men and angels, at the end of the world ^(l).

(a) Ps. 40:7-8; Heb. 10:5-10; John 4:34; John 10:18;
Phil. 2:8

(b) Gal. 4:4

(c) Matt. 3:15; Matt. 5:17; Heb. 5:8-9

(d) Matt. 26:37-38; Luke 22:44; Matt. 27:46

(e) Matt. 26:67-68, 27:27-50

(f) Mark 15:24, 37; Phil. 2:8

(g) Matt. 27:60; Acts 2:23-24, 27; Acts 13:29, 37; Rom. 6:9

(h) 1 Cor. 15:3-5

(i) Luke 24:39; John 20:25, 27

(j) Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-51; 1 Pet. 3:22

(k) Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; Heb. 9:24

(l) Acts 1:11; John 5:28-29; Rom. 14:9-10; Acts 10:42;
Matt. 13:40-42; Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4

5. The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience, and sacrifice of Himself, which He, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, has fully satisfied the justice of His Father ^(a); and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father has given unto Him ^(b).

(a) Rom. 5:19; Heb. 9:14, 16; Heb. 10:14; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 3:25-26

(b) Dan. 9:24, 26; 2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:19-20; Heb. 9:12, 15;
Eph. 1:11, 14; John 17:2

6. Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after His incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof were communicated unto the elect, in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, wherein He was revealed, and signified to be the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world: being yesterday and today the same, and forever. ^(a)

(a) Gal. 4:4-5; Gen. 3:15; 1 Cor. 10:4; Rev. 13:8; Heb. 13:8; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:15

7. Christ, in the work of mediation, acts according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself: ^(a) yet, by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature. ^(b)

(a) John 10:17-18; 1 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 1:3; Heb. 9:14

(b) Acts 20:28; John 3:13; 1 John 3:16; Luke 1:43; Rom. 9:5

8. To all those for whom Christ has purchased redemption, he does certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same ^(a), making intercession for them ^(b), and revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation ^(c), effectively persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit ^(d), overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner, and ways, as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation. ^(e)

(a) John 6:37, 39; John 10:15–16; 27–28

(b) 1 John 2:1–2; Rom. 8:34

(c) John 15:13, 15; Eph. 1:7–10; John 17:6

(d) John 14:26; Heb. 12:2; 2 Cor. 4:13; Rom. 8:9, 14;
Rom. 15:18–19; John 17:17

(e) Ps. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25–26; Mal. 4:2–3; Col. 2:15;
Luke 10:19

Study Questions

Preparation

1. Can you have assurance of salvation? If so, what is the basis of such assurance?

Observation

2. What does WCF 8.3, 8.4, and 8.5 say about how Christ became a Mediator for His people? How do we see the Father and the Holy Spirit relating to this?

3. How does Psalm 139:13-16 describe God's foreknowledge?

4. What does Romans 8:28-30 and Ephesians 1:3-14 say about God's predestination?

5. How does WCF 8.8 say we should handle the doctrine of predestination?

Reflection

6. How might this understanding of God's foreknowledge and predestination be a comfort to you as a believer?