

LESSON 6:

What Was Involved in Our Coming to Christ?

Summary

The fact that God chose a people for Himself from all eternity raises the question as to what that means experientially for the individual Christian. Understanding this requires examining the nature of regeneration, effectual calling, faith, and conversion.

REQUIRED READINGS

WCF ch. 9, "Of Free Will," WLC 58-60, WSC 29-30

WCF ch. 10, "Of Effectual Calling," WLC 67-69, WSC 31-32

WCF ch. 14, "Of Saving Faith," WLC 72-73, WSC 86

Are We Able to Come to Christ on Our Own? (WCF 9, WLC 58-60, WSC 29-30)

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CHAPTER IX—*Of Free-Will*

1. God has endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good or evil. ^(a)

^(a) James 1:13-14; Deut. 30:19; Isa. 7:11-12; Matt. 17:12; John 5:40; James 4:7

2. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom, and power to will and to do that which was good, and well pleasing to God; ^(a) but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it. ^(b)

^(a) Eccl. 7:29; Gen. 1:26, 31

^(b) Gen. 2:16-17; Gen. 3:6, 17

3. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: ^(a) so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, ^(b) and dead in sin, ^(c) is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto. ^(d)

^(a) Rom. 8:7-8; John 6:44, 65; John 15:5; Rom. 5:5

^(c) Eph. 2:1; 5, Col. 2:13

^(b) Rom. 3:10, 12, 23

^(d) John 6:44, 65; John 3:3, 5-6; Eph. 2:2-5; 1 Cor. 2:14; Tit. 3:3-5

4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage under sin; ^(a) and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; ^(b) yet so, that by reason of his remaining corruption, he does not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but does also will that which is evil. ^(c)

^(a) Col. 1:13; John 8:34, 36; Rom. 6:6-7

^(c) Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:14-25

^(b) Phil. 2:13; Rom. 6:14, 17-19, 22

5. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good only in the state of glory.

^(a) Eph. 4:13; Heb. 12:23; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24; Rev. 21:27

Westminster Larger Catechism	Westminster Smaller Catechism
<p>Question 58</p> <p><i>Q. How do we come to be made partakers of the benefits which Christ has procured?</i></p> <p>A. We are made partakers of the benefits which Christ has procured, by the application of them unto us, ^(a) which is the work especially of God the Holy Ghost. ^(b)</p> <p>^(a) John 1:11-12 ^(b) Tit. 3:5-6</p> <p>Question 59</p> <p><i>Q. Who are made partakers of redemption through Christ?</i></p> <p>A. Redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ has purchased it; ^(a) who are in time by the Holy Ghost enabled to believe in Christ according to the gospel. ^(b)</p> <p>^(a) Eph. 1:13-14, John 6:37, 39, John 10:15-16 ^(b) Eph. 2:8, 2 Cor. 4:13</p> <p>Question 60</p> <p><i>Q. Can they who have never heard the gospel, and so know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in him, be saved by their living according to the light of nature?</i></p> <p>A. They who, having never heard the gospel, ^(a) know not Jesus Christ, ^(b) and believe not in him, cannot be saved, ^(c) be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, ^(d) or the laws of that religion which they profess; ^(e) neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone, ^(f) who is the Savior only of his body the church. ^(g)</p> <p>^(a) Rom. 10:14 ^(b) 2 Thess. 1:8-9, Eph. 2:12, John 1:10-12 ^(c) John 8:24, Mark 16:16 ^(d) 1 Cor. 1:20-24 ^(e) John 4:22, Rom. 9:31-32, Phil. 3:4-9 ^(f) Acts 4:12 ^(g) Eph. 5:23</p>	<p>Question 29</p> <p><i>Q. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?</i></p> <p>A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us, ^(a) by his Holy Spirit. ^(b)</p> <p>^(a) John 1:11-12 ^(b) Tit. 3:5-6</p> <p>Question 30</p> <p><i>Q. How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?</i></p> <p>The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, ^(a) and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling. ^(b)</p> <p>^(a) Eph. 1:13-14, John 6:37-39, Eph. 2:8 ^(b) Eph. 3:17, 1 Cor. 1:9</p>

How Then Do We to Come to Christ? (WCF 10, WLC 67-68, WSC 31-32)

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CHAPTER X—Of Effectual Calling

1. All those whom God has predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call ^(a), by His Word and Spirit ^(b), out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ ^(c); enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God ^(d); taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh ^(e); renewing their wills, and by His almighty power, determining them to that which is good ^(f), and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: ^(g) yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace ^(h).

(a) Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:28, 30; Rom. 11:7; Eph. 1:5, 10–11;
2 Tim. 1:9–10

(e) Ezek. 36:26

(b) 2 Thess. 2:13–14; James 1:18; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6; 1 Cor. 2:12

(f) Ezek. 11:19; Phil. 2:13; Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27;
John 3:5; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23

(c) 2 Tim. 1:9–10; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rom. 8:2; Eph. 2:1–10

(g) Eph. 1:19; John 6:44–45; Acts 16:14

(d) Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 2:10, 12; Eph. 1:17–18; 2 Cor. 4:6

(h) Song. 1:4; Ps. 110:3; John 6:37; Matt. 11:28; Rev. 22:17;
Rom. 6:16–18; Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:29

2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man ^(a), who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit ^(b), he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it ^(c).

(a) 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:4–5; Eph. 2:4–5, 8–9; Rom. 9:11

(c) John 6:37; John 5:25; Ezek. 36:27; 1 John 5:1;

(b) 1 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:7–9; Eph. 2:5; Titus 3:4–5

1 John 3:9

3. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved by Christ, through the Spirit ^(a), who works when, and where, and how He pleases ^(b); so also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word ^(c).

(a) Gen. 17:7; Luke 18:15–16; Acts 2:38–39; John 3:3, 5;
1 John 5:12; Rom. 8:9; Luke 1:15

(b) John 3:8

(c) John 16:7–8; 1 John 5:12; Acts 4:12

4. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word ^(a), and may have some common operations of the Spirit ^(b), yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved ^(c); much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the laws of that religion they do profess ^(d). And to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested ^(e).

(a) Matt. 13:14–15; Acts 28:24; Acts 13:48; Matt. 22:14

(d) Acts 4:12; 1 John 4:2–3; 2 John 9; John 14:6;

(b) Matt. 13:20–21; Matt. 7:22; Heb. 6:4–5

Eph. 2:12–13; John 4:22; John 17:3; Rom. 10:13–17

(c) John 6:37, 64–66; John 8:24; John 13:18; John 17:12

(e) 2 John 9–11; 1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:6–8

Westminster Larger Catechism	Westminster Shorter Catechism
<p>Question 67</p> <p>Q. What is effectual calling?</p> <p>A. Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace, ^(a) whereby (out of his free and special love to his elect, and from nothing in them moving him thereunto) ^(b) he does, in his accepted time, invite and draw them to Jesus Christ, by his word and Spirit; ^(c) savingly enlightening their minds, ^(d) renewing and powerfully determining their wills, ^(e) so as they (although in themselves dead in sin) are hereby made willing and able freely to answer his call, and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein. ^(f)</p> <p>(a) John 5:25, Eph. 1:18–20, 2 Tim. 1:8–9 (b) Tit. 3:4–5, Eph. 2:4–5, 7–9, Rom. 9:11 (c) 2 Cor. 5:20, 2 Cor. 6:1–2, John 6:44, 2 Thess. 2:13–14 (d) Acts 26:18, 1 Cor. 2:10, 12 (e) Ezek. 11:19, Ezek. 36:26–27, John 6:45 (f) Eph. 2:5, Phil. 2:13, Deut. 30:6</p>	<p>Question 31</p> <p>Q. What is effectual calling?</p> <p>A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, ^(a) whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, ^(b) enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, ^(c) and renewing our wills, ^(d) he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel. ^(e)</p> <p>(a) 2 Tim. 1:9, 2 Thess. 2:13–14 (b) Acts 2:37 (c) Acts 26:18 (d) Ezek. 36:26–27 (e) John 6:44–45, Phil. 2:13</p>
<p>Question 68</p> <p>Q. Are the elect only effectually called?</p> <p>A. All the elect, and they only, are effectually called: ^(a) although others may be, and often are, outwardly called by the ministry of the word, ^(b) and have some common operations of the Spirit; ^(c) who, for their willful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in their unbelief, do never truly come to Jesus Christ. ^(d)</p> <p>(a) Acts 13:48 (b) Matt. 22:14 (c) Matt. 7:22, Matt. 13:20–21, Heb. 6:4–6 (d) John 12:38–40, Acts 28:25–27, John 6:64–65, Ps. 81:11–12</p>	<p>Question 32</p> <p>Q. What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?</p> <p>A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, ^(a) adoption, ^(b) and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them. ^(c)</p> <p>(a) Rom. 8:30 (b) Eph. 1:5 (c) 1 Cor. 1:26, 30</p>

What Does It Mean for Us to Have Saving Faith? (WCF 14, WLC 72-73, WSC 86)

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CHAPTER XIV – *Of Saving Faith*

1. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls ^(a) is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts; ^(b) and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word ^(c); by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened ^(d).

(a) Titus 1:1; Heb. 10:39

(c) Matt. 28:19-20; Rom. 10:14, 17; 1 Cor. 1:21

(b) 1 Cor. 12:3; John 3:5; Titus 3:5; John 6:44-45, 65;
2 Cor. 4:13; Eph. 1:17-19; Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:29;
2 Pet. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:2

(d) 1 Pet. 2:2; Acts 20:32; Rom. 1:16-17; Matt. 28:19;
Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 11:23-29; Rom. 4:11;
Luke 17:5; Phil. 4:6-7

2. By this faith, a Christian believes to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein ^(a); and acts differently upon that which each particular passage thereof contains; yielding obedience to the commands ^(b), trembling at the threatenings ^(c), and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come ^(d). But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace ^(e).

(a) 2 Pet. 1:20-21; John 4:42; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 John 5:9-10;
Acts 24:14

(c) Ezra 9:4; Isa. 66:2; Heb. 4:1

(d) Heb. 11:13; 1 Tim. 4:8

(b) Ps. 119:10-11, 48, 97-98, 167-168; John 14:15;
Rom. 16:26

(e) John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Gal. 2:20; Acts 15:11;
2 Tim. 1:9-10

3. This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong ^(a); may be often and many ways assailed, and weakened, but gets the victory ^(b); growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance, through Christ ^(c), who is both the author and finisher of our faith ^(d).

(a) Heb. 5:13-14; Rom. 14:1-2; Matt. 6:30; Rom. 4:19-20;
Matt. 8:10

(c) Heb. 6:11-12; Heb. 10:22; Col. 2:2

(d) Heb. 12:2

(b) Luke 22:31-32; Eph. 6:16; 1 John 5:4-5

Westminster Larger Catechism	Westminster Shorter Catechism
<p>Question 72</p> <p>Q. <i>What is justifying faith?</i></p> <p>A. Justifying faith is a saving grace, ^(a) wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit ^(b) and word of God, ^(c) whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition, ^(d) not only assents to the truth of the promise of the gospel, ^(e) but received and rested upon Christ and his righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, ^(f) and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation. ^(g)</p> <p>(a) Heb. 10:39 (b) 2 Cor. 4:13, Eph. 1:17–19 (c) Rom. 10:14–17 (d) Acts 2:37, Acts 16:30, John 16:8–9, Rom. 5:6, Eph. 2:1, Acts 4:12) (e) Eph. 1:13 (f) John 1:12, Acts 16:31, Acts 10:43 (g) Phil. 3:9, Acts 15:11</p>	<p>Question 86</p> <p>Q. <i>What is faith in Jesus Christ?</i></p> <p>A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, ^(a) whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel. ^(b)</p> <p>(a) Heb. 10:39 (b) John 1:12, Isa. 26:3–4, Phil. 3:9, Gal. 2:16</p>
<p>Question 73</p> <p>Q. <i>How does faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?</i></p> <p>A. Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it, ^(a) nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification; ^(b) but only as it is an instrument by which he receives and applies Christ and his righteousness. ^(c)</p> <p>(a) Gal. 3:11, Rom. 3:28 (b) Rom. 4:5, Rom. 10:10 (c) John 1:12, Phil. 3:9, Gal. 2:16</p>	