Of God's Decrees: Predestination and Reprobation

Westminster Confession of Faith 3.3–8

I. WCF 3.3–4: God Decrees Angels and Men to Eternal Life or Death

A. The eternal destination of angels and humans isn't outside of God's sovereign decree.

i. God is sovereign even over his _____ creatures (angels and humans).

ii. 1 Tim 5:21: "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels."

B. The number of both elect angels and humans is fixed and unchangeable.

i. God is sovereign over the number of the elect, and he doesn't _____.

ii. So, the number of the elect doesn't _____ either.

II. WCF 3.5–6: Predestination unto Life

A. WCF 3.5: The nature of God's predestination

i. When did God predestine us to eternal life?

1. Eph 1:4: "He chose us in him before the _____."

ii. What motivated God to predestine some humans to eternal life?

1. Eph 1:5: "He predestined us … according to the good purpose of his will."
2. 2 Tim 1:9: "God saved us… because of his own purpose and grace."

iii. Our predestination to eternal life is "in Christ"—part of _____ with Christ.

1. Eph 1:4: "He chose us *in him*…"
2. 2 Tim 1:9: "God saved us… b/c of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in _____ before the ages began."

iv. Does God predestine us to hear the Gospel or believe, but we have to do the rest?

1. No! We are elect to _____ with Christ in heaven!

v. Is predestination conditional or unconditional?

1. Arminianism: God predestines people whom he foresees will _____.
2. Pelagianism: God predestines people whom he foresees will be _____.
3. God's decree of predestination is _____ (Eph 2:8–9; Rom 9:16)
4. We are not elect because we are _____ than everyone else!

vi. What is the purpose of God's predestination?

1. Eph 1:6: "He predestined us… to the praise of his glorious grace."

B. WCF 3.6: The means of God's salvation

i. We usually think of election as having the end goal of faith or salvation, but the point is, those are just means to get us to the end goal of _____.

ii. Only those whom God has elected to glory can receive these blessings.

III. WCF 3.7: Reprobation

A. Double Predestination: God's decree extends even to those who will go to hell.

i. But there is a difference between election and reprobation.

ii. God choses the elect in Christ, but he _____ the reprobate.

B. What motivated God's decree of reprobation?

i. "He has mercy on whomever he wills, and hardens whomever he wills" (Ro 9:18).

ii. If you agree that God only saves some and others are punished in hell, then it only makes sense to say that no one is punished _____.

C. What is the purpose of God's decree of reprobation?

i. Predestination manifests God's _____; reprobation manifests his _____.

IV. WCF 3.8: The teaching of predestination

A. "The hidden things belong to the Lord, what is revealed belongs to us" (Deut 29:29).

B. Vos: "The best proof that [God] will never cease to love us lies in that he never began."

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3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.

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.

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, 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; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

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. 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, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

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 dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

8. The doctrine of this 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.t 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.