

God's Eternal Counsel

“The counsel of the Lord is his eternal good pleasure, according to which he willed and conceived all things that are ever realized or occur in time.” Hoeksema 222

Biblical Data:

קָח- choq (pronounced “khole”) #2706 appointed, bound, commandment, convenient, custom, decreed, due, law,

Psalms 2:7-8 God's “decree” concerning the Son

Job 38:8-11 God's “decree” concerning the boundaries of the sea

Micah 7:11 God's “decree” about the rebuilding of the walls

ὁρίζω- horizo (Pronounced “hor-id-zo”) #3724 declare, determine, limit, ordain.

Luke 22:22 God “determined” the Son of Man will be betrayed

Acts 2:23 Jesus was handed over by the “predetermined” plan of God

זָמַם- zamam (pronounced “zaw-mam”) #2161 consider, devise, imagine, plot, purpose. Mainly used of men to purpose to do evil...But used of God several times

Jer. 4:27-28 God's purpose to bring judgment

Jer. 51:12 The Lord's purpose to bring judgment on Babylon

Lam 2:17 The Lord has carried out his purpose of judgment upon Israel

Zech. 1:6 The Lord purposed judgment

Πρόθεσις- prothesis (pronounced “prothesis”) #4286 a setting forth, i.e. (figuratively) proposal (intention); specially, the show-bread (in the Temple) as exposed before God -- purpose, shew(-bread).

Romans 8:28 All things work together for those called according to His “purpose”

Romans 9:11 in order that God's “purpose” in election might stand

Ephesians 1:11 According to the “purpose” of him who works all things....

Ephesians 3:11 The eternal “purpose” in Christ Jesus to display his manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers

2 Timothy 1:9 We are saved according to God’s “purpose” and grace...

עֵצָה- etsah (pronounced “ay-tsaw”) #6098 advice, advisement, counselor, purpose

Job 38:2 God questions Job as to who “darkens his counsel” without knowledge

Psalms 33:10-11 The Lord brings to nothing the “counsel” of the nations...and His “counsel” stands forever.

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans of man, but the “counsel” of the Lord that prevails

Proverbs 21:30 There is no “counsel” that can succeed against the Lord

Isaiah 46:10 God says his “purpose” will stand

רָצוֹן- chephets (pronounced “khay’-fets”) #2656 acceptable, delightful, desire, things desired, matter, pleasant, purpose

Isaiah 44:28 Cyrus is the one who will accomplish God’s “pleasure”

Isaiah 46:10 God will do all that he “pleases”

Isaiah 48:14 God’s servant will carry out his “pleasure” on Babylon

Isaiah 53:10 The “pleasure” of the Lord will prosper in the hands of the suffering servant

εὐδοκέω- eudokeo (pronounced “yoo-dok-eh’-o”) #2106/2107 think good, be well pleased, be willing

Matthew 11:26 it was “well-pleasing” to the Father to hide the revelation of the Son from the wise and learned and reveal it to babes.

Luke 12:32 It’s the Father’s “good pleasure” to give them the kingdom

Col 1:19 The Father was “pleased” to have all his fulness dwell in the Son

Βουλή- boule' (pronounced "boo-lay') counsel, deliberate wisdom, decree.

Acts 2:23 Jesus was handed over by the predetermined "plan" of God

Acts 4:28 God's hand and his "plan" determined beforehand that Jesus would be killed.

Ephesians 1:11 according to the "counsel" of his will

Doctrinal Considerations:

1. The ETERNITY of God's Decree

"This counsel of God is eternal, as God is eternal. Never was the Lord without his counsel. Indeed, the counsel of God is free and sovereign, an act of his own will. In the abstract it may possibly be said that before the infinite God there existed an infinite number of possibilities in regard to a world that was to be created, and that the sovereign God with an absolutely free dispensation of his will determined to create the world as it actually exists and develops. But however this may be, God's counsel may never be presented as if there were ever in God a period in which he was without his decree and only with infinite riches of thoughts and conceptions, from which at a later period he chose or decided to realize that counsel in creation and glorification. On the contrary, known unto God are all his works from eternity (Acts 15:18). The decree of God is as eternal as the eternal God himself." Hoeksema 225

2. The ALL-COMPREHENSIVENESS of God's Decree

"Not only is this counsel of God all-comprehensive in regard to all things in time, small or great, (see Matt 10:29-30 and Luke 12:6) but it also includes the rational, moral deeds of men and angels. This also must be emphasized, because unless this is strictly maintained, the sovereignty and lordship of God cannot be confessed in accordance with Scripture. All the thoughts and intents, the desires and aspirations of the heart of man are included in and determined by the counsel of God." Hoeksema 225

Genesis 50:20

Proverbs 21:1

Isaiah 10:5-19

Surely the Lord Jesus was taken and crucified by wicked hands, but only through the determinate counsel of God (Acts 2:23 and Acts 4:27-28)

3. God's Alleged PERMISSIVE WILL

"With regard to the sinful deeds of men and devils, we must not speak only of God's permission but also of his determination. Holy Scripture speaks a far more positive language. We realize that the motive for speaking of God's permission rather than of his determined will regarding sin and the evil deeds of men is that God may never be presented as the author of sin. But this purpose is not reached by speaking of God's permission or his permissive will: if the Almighty permits what he could just as well have prevented, it is from an ethical viewpoint that same as if he had committed it himself. In this way we lose God and his sovereignty: permission supposes the idea that there is a power outside of God that can produce and do something apart from Him, but which is simply permitted by God to act and operate. This is dualism, and it annihilates the complete and absolute sovereignty of God. We must maintain that also sin and all the wicked deeds of men and angels have a place in the counsel of God. It is certainly according to the determinate counsel of God that Christ was nailed to the cross and that Pilate and Herod, with the Gentiles and Israel, were gathered together against the holy child Jesus (Acts 2:23; Acts 4:24-28). Therefore, it is much better to say that the Lord in his counsel not only hates sin, but has also determined that which he hates should come to pass in order to reveal his hatred and to serve the cause of his covenant." Hoeksema 226-227

4. The IMMUTABILITY of God's decree

"The counsel of God is immutable. Man's counsel is often brought to naught by various circumstances; he changes his mind and alters his course for various reasons. But this is not the case with the counsel of God. He knows all things, and nothing can resist his will (Rom 9:19). Therefore, the counsel of God is also absolutely efficacious: "He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Ps. 115:3) and nothing can ever thwart his purpose. The counsel of God is perfect, wise, and good. He determines not simply the things that are, but also the things that develop and the entire history of man and creation as it must lead in the way of sin and death to the perfection of his eternal kingdom. In all this the perfect and adorable wisdom of God is manifest: with the most effective and proper means God leads all things to the final end which he has conceived from eternity in his counsel. In a word, all the so-called incommunicable, as well as the communicable, attributes of God must be ascribed to the counsel of the living God." Hoeksema 227

5. The ONENESS of God's decree

"It follows that God's oneness and simplicity that also the counsel of God is one. This oneness and simplicity of God's counsel must not be conceived as dead uniformity and monotony, but rather as beautiful harmony manifesting the manifold wisdom of God. For that reason we may never separate the counsel of God into various parts as a mechanical whole may be divided. Nevertheless, we certainly can distinguish between the various moments in the one divine conception. The counsel of God concerns Christ and his people, angels and men, elect and reprobate, it concerns the stars and their courses, the beasts of the field and the lilies of the valley, health and sickness, fruitful and unfruitful years, war and peace, and all the tumult of the world; the history of every man and the lot of all, as well as their destination, are fixed by the counsel of God...Hence the distinction between the counsel of providence and the counsel of predestination...(this distinction) is nevertheless defective, because the counsel of God is one, and because, according to scripture, all things in that counsel serve the glory of God in Christ and his church." Hoeksema 228

6. ELECTION and REPROBATION

-Scriptural Terms for Election

יָדָע- yada (pronounced "yaw-dah") #3045 of God's knowing persons.

Genesis 18:19 God Knows Abraham

Amos 3:1-2 and Hosea 13:4-5 God knows his chosen people

Προγινώσκω- proginosko (pronounced "prog-in-ocē'-ko") #4267 to know beforehand. Has both a noun and verb form.

Romans 8:29, Romans 11:2,

1 Peter 1:2, 1 Cor 8:3, Gal 4:9

בָּחַר- bachar (pronounced "baw-khar") a divine choice (152 occurrences in the OT)

Deuteronomy 7:6-7 God "chose" Israel

Deuteronomy 14:2, 2 Chronicles 12:13, Nehemiah 9:7

ἐκλογή- ekloge' (pronounced "ek-log-ay'") #1589 a divine selection, choice by God

Acts 9:15- Paul is a "chosen" instrument

Romans 9:11 and 11:5, 7, 28 God's election of Jacob, the remnant and Israel

1 Thess. 1:4 and 2 Peter 1:10

Πρόθεσις- prothesis (pronounced "prothesis") #4286 a setting forth, i.e. (figuratively) proposal (intention); specially, the show-bread (in the Temple) as exposed before God -- purpose, shew(-bread).

Romans 9:11

Ephesians 1:9

2 Timothy 1:9

Προορίζω- prooridzo (pronounced "pro-or-id'-zo") #4309 to predetermine, foreordain

Romans 8:29

Acts 4:28

1 Cor 2:7

Ephesians 1:5 and 11

-Reprobation

ἀδόκιμος- adokimos (pronounced "ad-ok'-ee-mos") #96 failing to pass the test, unapproved, counterfeit

Never used in reference to eternal reprobation, but translated "reprobate" in the KJV- 1 Cor 9:27, 2 Cor 13:5, 2 Tim 3:8, Titus 1:16)

The idea of eternal reprobation is very clearly and emphatically expressed, even apart from the fact that election presupposes reprobation.

Malachi 1:2-4

Romans 9:10-13

Isaiah 6:6-13

Matt 11:25-27

Mark 4:8-12

John 12:37-41

John 17:9

Romans 9:18, 21-23

1 Peter 2:6-8

7. Election and Reprobation Defined

Election may be defined as the eternal and sovereign decree of God to lead the church as the body of Christ, with all its individual members, each in his own position, to eternal salvation and glory.

Reprobation is the eternal and sovereign decree of God to determine some men to be vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction in the way of sin, as manifestations of his justice and to serve the purpose of the realization of his elect church.

8. Lapsarianism- Supralapsarianism vs. Infralapsarianism

Supralapsarianism presents the order of the decrees of God in such a way that the decree of election precedes the decree concerning creation and the fall.

Supralapsarian Order:

- 1.) The glory of God in Christ and his church
- 2.) The election of Christ as the head of the church
- 3.) The elect church in Christ (and reprobation)
- 4.) The fall of all men
- 5.) The creation of the world and man

Infralapsarians turn this order around. They also proceed from the glory of God as the purpose of all things, but after that they have the following order:

- 1.) The creation of the world
- 2.) The fall of man
- 3.) The election unto salvation of some, together with the passing by of others
- 4.) Christ as the mediator to realize the redemption of the elect

A Survey or Table declaring the order of the causes of saluation and damnation according to Gods word. It may be in stead of an ocular Catechisme to them which can not read, for by the pointing of the finger, they may sensibly perceiue the chiefe points of religion, and the order of them.

God created all things for himselfe, and the wicked man for the euill day. Prov. 16:4. Hath not the potter power ouer the clay, to make of the same lump one vessell to honour, and another to dishonour. Rom. 9:21. If any be in Christ let him be a new creature. II Cor. 5:17.



William Perkins
1558-1602

Salvation: Introduction

William Perkins, an outstanding preacher, made great contributions to the Puritan movement despite the shortness of his life. He was born in Warton, Warwickshire, and educated in Christ College, Cambridge. In his early years he demonstrated scholarly ability, but his personal life was wild and sinful. After his conversion he became a strong exponent of Calvinism and always dealt sympathetically with those in spiritual need. He became a fellow at the college in 1578.

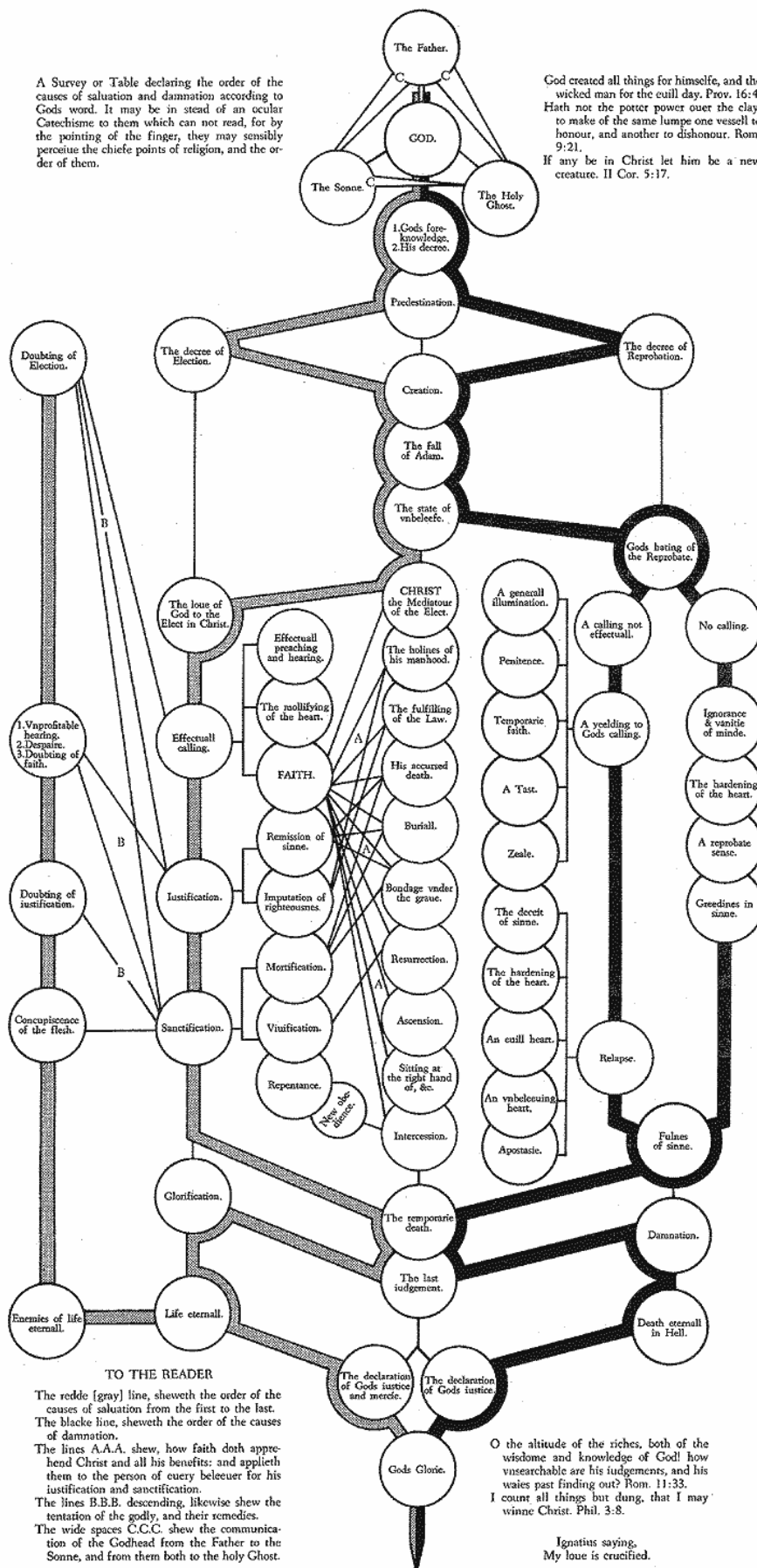
Perkins was later ordained and began his ministry preaching to prisoners in the Cambridge jail. He is said to have encountered a young condemned prisoner who was terrified not so much of death as of the impending judgment of God. The Puritan preacher knelt beside him to "show what the grace of God can do to strengthen thee." He showed him that Christ is the means of salvation by the grace of God and urged him with tears to believe in Him and experience the remission of his sins. The youth did so and was able to face his execution with composure, a glorious display of God's sovereign grace. This incident should be kept in mind while studying Perkins's chart of election and reprobation. It shows that his theology did not make him cold and heartless when dealing with sinners in need of a Savior.

Around 1585 Perkins was chosen rector of St. Andrews, Cambridge, and continued there until his death in 1602. His individual writings consisted mainly of treatises on the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and expositions of Galatians 1-5, Matthew 5-7, and Hebrews 11. He wrote the practical *Cases of Conscience*. His writings were popularly received and were translated into Latin, French, Dutch, and Spanish. They were collected in the three-volume *The Works of William Perkins* (1616-1618).

Perkins's "Golden Chain" is a basic guide to Puritan theology and preaching. Though not every Puritan preacher agreed with each detail of Perkins's Chain, it does represent Reformed doctrine as generally interpreted by the Puritans. His analysis and organization of soteriology is amazing, especially in relating the work of Christ to the elect believer. Perkins considers faith the result of God's effectual call rather than of sinful man's "free will." He also considers true repentance to result from sanctification and to lead to complete obedience.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the "Golden Chain" is the religious zealot whose repentance is only temporary and arises from his sinful heart. In the twentieth century we need, more than ever before, to realize that such individuals are still unconverted and not merely "out of fellowship." Perkins's concept appears again in the selection on ecclesiology by Richard Baxter. The Puritans never considered church members saved just because they met outward requirements like baptism, confession of a creed, and response to an altar call. They preached the perseverance of true believers in obedience and good works as the result of true conversion. They were careful not to give people a false sense of assurance. The great problem of worldliness in our churches today can be solved only with this kind of preaching. Thus the emotional but false repentance of a Saul or Judas must not be taken as a sign of true conversion.

The Puritans generally also were wary of those "converts" who showed extreme religious "zeal." Not that they opposed spiritual zeal, but they recognized it could be a "cover-up" for deep, unrepentant sin. Modern psychologists verify that many people with great religious or social zeal are attempting to sublimate guilt and anxiety. Again, today's ministers must urge their people to be as concerned about what they are as about what they are doing. In today's churches we see much activity but little real spiritual growth and godly living.



TO THE READER

The redde [gray] line, sheweth the order of the causes of saluation from the first to the last. The blacke line, sheweth the order of the causes of damnation.

The lines A.A.A. shew, how faith doth apprehend Christ and all his benefits: and applieth them to the person of euery beleuer for his iustification and sanctification.

The lines B.B.B. descending, likewise shew the temptation of the godly, and their remedies.

The wide spaces C.C.C. shew the communication of the Godhead from the Father to the Sonne, and from them both to the holy Ghost.

O the altitude of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how vnsearchable are his iudgements, and his waies past finding out? Rom. 11:33. I count all things but dung, that I may winne Christ. Phil. 3:8.

Ignatius saying,
My loue is crucified.