

## *From Your Pastor*

### *A Study of the Shorter Catechism*

**WSC Question 20, Part I:** Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

**Answer:** God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

**An explanation:** A glorious truth is made known in the Scriptures! Although man has fallen into sin, and by nature he is unable to do any good, or perform righteousness as God requires, and he is totally helpless to save himself from his predicament, God has sent hope for rescue and redemption. God has not left mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery!! Romans 3:21-22 says: ***“...Now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it- the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.”*** God provides a perfect righteousness for salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ for all who believe!

Man’s salvation is nothing deserved, but only by grace. Only by grace, because of God’s ***“mere good pleasure”*** is salvation possible in Christ (Matt. 11:25-26). God’s good pleasure is something that He alone decided to do, in order to show forth His goodness and power, and to save and redeem a people for Himself, for His own glory! (Eph. 1:3-14). Jesus gives hope to His people by saying to them, ***“Fear not, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom”*** (Luke 12:32).

The Covenant of Works with Adam and the entire human race had been broken; there was no hope to attain salvation through works of the Law (Rom. 3:20). Though the Law of God is holy, righteous, and good (Rom. 7:12), there was no power in the Law to transform man’s sinful heart, no power in the Law to give life, and there was nothing good that dwelled in man by nature to do the works of God (Rom. 7:18; Gal. 3:10, 21). Only God, and God alone could give hope in this hopeless predicament of sinfulness (cf. Eph. 2:12).

**And He did!!** Two of the most glorious and hope-filled words in Scripture declare it: ***“But God...”*** (Eph. 2:4a). Although man was sinful, enslaved, dead in trespasses and sins, unable in himself to do any good for God, God who is rich in mercy, saved a people through the Covenant of Grace, because of the perfect righteousness found in Christ (Gal. 3:16)! It is by grace we have been saved, and not of works—no one can boast—salvation is of the LORD, and the LORD *alone*!! (Eph. 2:1-10; Tit. 3:4-7). What man could not do, what the Law could not do, ***“God has done...”***

***“For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit”*** (Rom. 8:3-4).

**A Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, my salvation is only because of your good pleasure and grace. Let me be ever thankful for your mercies in Christ Jesus. Thank you for rescuing me from your just wrath and what my sins deserve, and to give me salvation and a perfect righteousness in Jesus! Thank you for revealing this to me, and giving me all the power and grace needed to take hold of the promises of the Covenant of Grace in Christ. Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to teach me your ways, to cause me to love your Law, and to walk NOT according to the flesh, but by the Spirit! **More in Part II...**

In Christ’s love,  
Pastor Biggs

*“But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior...”*

- Titus 3:4-6

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**WSC Question 20, Part II:** Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

**Answer:** God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a **covenant of grace**, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

**An explanation:** "...*Did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery...by a Redeemer...*" **What is the Covenant of Grace?** In the Covenant of Works, God made a covenant with Adam and all those he represented. Adam, and all of his seed (all humanity) fell into sin and rebellion in this covenant (Gal. 3:10ff). But God, who is rich in grace and mercy, also made another covenant, the Covenant of Grace, with Christ, the Second Adam, and all of His seed or offspring (the elect). "*Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ*" (Gal. 3:16). As in Adam all die because of Adam's sin and transgression, so in Christ all live and receive grace because of Christ's perfect obedience: "*Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men*" (Rom. 5:18). This Covenant of Grace was first announced in history after the fall of man into sin in Genesis 3:15.

Those who are represented by Christ Jesus in the Covenant of Grace, who are His offspring, true sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:8-10), are those God has elected (Rom. 8:29-31). This election that God decreed from eternity past (Eph. 1:3-14) is realized in history when someone is acted on by the Holy Spirit, regenerated, or made alive, and responds in faith and repentance before God, receiving Christ as their Savior! (Eph. 2:1-10; Acts 4:12). "*But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth*" (2 Th. 2:13; cf. 1Th. 1:5). "*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*" (Acts 13:48).

The foundation of the Covenant of Grace is the covenant made between the Father and the Son as Mediator of the elect in eternity past, or "before the ages began" (2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 13:20-21, this covenant sometimes also called the Covenant of "Redemption" or "Peace", see Isa. 54:10; Ezek. 37:26). Thomas Vincent (1634-78) wrote: "God did covenant and promise to Christ, as the representative of the elect, that, upon condition He would submit to the penalty which the sins of the elect did deserve, and undertake in all things the office of a Mediator, He should be successful, so as to justify and save them" (see Isa. 53:10-11). The glorious promise of the Covenant of Grace is "*I will be their God, and they shall be my people*" (Heb. 8:10). God has promised to all of His elect that He will provide for them in Christ all that they need to embrace the covenant: Spiritual regeneration, knowledge of God, faith, repentance, justification, sanctification, and glorification! "*And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified*" (Rom. 8:30; Ezek. 36:25-27; Heb. 8:10-11; Eph. 2:8; Jude 24-25).

**A Prayer:** Dear Kind King and Heavenly Father, Salvation is from you! All that I have in Christ Jesus, has been given to me as a gift because of your grace that was provided for me from eternity past, before the ages began! My embracing of Christ Jesus as my Savior from sin was a gift from you. I am yours, not my own, I've been bought with a price, and owe my life to you. Let me live faithfully before you in instant, exact, and joyful obedience by faith.

**In Christ's love,  
Pastor Biggs**