

**Officer Training**  
**“God is in Charge, He Created and He Made Covenant”**  
**Lesson 3**

**Introduction:** Sovereignty of God<sup>1</sup> ... innumerable places in Scripture ...

**Psalm 33:11** “But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.”

Applied to our salvation (\_\_\_\_\_): **Ephesians 1:4-6, 11**

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,”

**Scripture (and this portion of the WCF) teach that ...**

1. All things, including all of the acts of men are \_\_\_\_\_ by God.

**HIS DECREE IS ALL-ENCOMPASSING:**

1. All actions of men whether ...

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ephesians 2:10 “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” ... OR ...
- \_\_\_\_\_ Acts 2:23 “This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.” Acts 4:27-28 “Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.”

2. \_\_\_\_\_ (dependent on other events)

Genesis 50:20 “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

3. The means as well as the ends (WCF III, 6)

2 Thessalonians 2:13 “But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.”

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<sup>1</sup> Common Terms - God’s Decrees

Foreordination - Sovereign plan whereby He decides all that is to happen in the world

Predestination - that aspect of God’s decree that relates to eternal destinies of men and angels.

a. Election - that aspect that refers to the salvation of sinners.

b. Reprobation - that aspect that refers to sinners being left to their own evil desires and therefore justly condemned (Proverbs 16:4)

4. The duration of man's life

Psalm 139:16 "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

5. The place of man's habitation – Acts 17:26

6. Man's eternal destiny – Ephesians 1

- Nothing \_\_\_\_\_ God's decree Romans 11:34  
"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"
- Nothing \_\_\_\_\_ God's decree Daniel 4:34,35  
"Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and ... praised the Most High ... and glorified him who lives forever.  
His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?'"
- Nothing \_\_\_\_\_ God's decree  
Psalm 115:3 "Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him."  
Proverbs 19:21 "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails."

3. Men act \_\_\_\_\_.

If God has foreordained all, how can the actions of man be "free" and how can he be held "responsible"?

While all actions are predetermined by God, yet they are freely done, because people wanted to do them.

\_\_\_\_\_ = the \_\_\_\_\_, not being forced to do what one doesn't want to do.

Because man does what he does freely, without compulsion, he is \_\_\_\_\_ for his actions.

\*\* Though hard to harmonize, Scripture teaches both God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.

**G. I. Williamson:** "Just as we may say that God is good and therefore cannot do evil, so we may say that man (by nature) is evil and cannot (of himself) do good." <sup>2</sup>

**Illustration:** A lion in Africa will lie down and die in a field of grass before he will eat the grass. Why? He has a carnivore nature. For him to eat grass he

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<sup>2</sup> G. I. Williamson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Groups*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1980, p. 31.

would need to get a new nature ... a herbivore nature. Similarly ... a human has a “sin-avore nature”. No body makes him sin any more than nobody makes the lion eat meat. And just as the lion freely chooses not to eat grass so the unregenerate person freely chooses (consistent with his nature) not to do righteousness.<sup>3</sup>

3. God does not simply predestinate those he \_\_\_\_\_ will repent & believe by their own will power.<sup>4</sup>

**Romans 8:29, 30** “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”

\_\_\_\_\_ = to love beforehand

**Deuteronomy 7:6-8** “The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

**Jeremiah 1:5** “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

4. The only reason given for why God saves through Predestination is for his \_\_\_\_\_.

**Romans 9:22, 23** “What if God, choosing to show his wrath and *make his power known*, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? 23 What if he did this to make *the riches of his glory* known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— “

In punishing vessels of wrath – He manifests His displeasure against sin  
In pardoning vessels of mercy – He manifests riches of His mercy & grace

Predestination is two-sided:

} Romans 9:16

<sup>3</sup> J. M. Boice and Donald Grey Barnhouse both used this illustration

<sup>4</sup> If a person could repent by his own will power it would destroy grace (Romans 11:6). God would “foresee” their initiative toward him and reward this “work” with his favor (earned).

Election – Displays His mercy, grace, and love  
Reprobation – Displays His holiness, justice, and wrath

### Application:

- Greatly \_\_\_\_\_ us as we recognize His sovereignty over all  
  
Romans 11:33-36 “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!  
‘Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?’  
‘Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?’ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.”
- Teaches us \_\_\_\_\_ on Him – knowing we are responsible for our own actions  
Philippians 2:12,13 “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.
- Provides us with \_\_\_\_\_ in daily living  
Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”
- Leads to \_\_\_\_\_  
2 Peter 1:10 “Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall,”

### THE FIRST DECREE EXECUTED BY GOD IS CREATION

**Louis Berkhof:** “Creation is the beginning and basis of all divine revelation, and also the foundation of all ethical and religious life. The doctrine of creation can be learned from no other source than Scripture and can be accepted only by faith.”<sup>5</sup>

#### IF GOD DID NOT MAKE ALL THINGS ...

- He is not over all things and worthy of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Man is just a complex biological accident / a machine ... why try to be or act in an exalted or noble manner ... just be pointless sensing device.

- We need not look to him for explanations of life’s meaning or guidance concerning the ultimate issues of life.
- We are alone and life has no certain purpose or end.

<sup>5</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Arlington Heights, IL.: Christian Liberty Press, 1933, p. 35.

Without a personal beginning there is no explanation for the presence of personality and purpose in a world. An impersonal beginning that was the result of chance can produce only impersonality and randomness.

Evolutionary theory does not prove any of its major premises:

1. An old universe ... why fossils may not be “old”
2. It assumes that all of life developed from simple life forms to complex ones through transitional links from species to species ... no evidence.
3. Matter and Energy have always existed ... are eternal ... this is a religious or philosophical statement and has nothing to do with science.

Some faithful Bible scholars not held to a “literal day” interpretation of the Creation days the literal interpretation is favored by the following considerations<sup>6</sup>:

1. The Hebrew word **YOM** (day) primarily denotes an ordinary day, and should be so understood unless the context demands another interpretation. There are some examples of a metaphorical use of the word and in each case that is clear (e.g. Ps. 50:15; Eccl. 7:14; Zech. 4:10; 2 Peter 3:8)
2. The repeated use of the phrase, “\_\_\_\_\_” reinforces the literal view. This is true even though the sun is not created until the 4<sup>th</sup> day but the sun and the stars are light bearers not themselves lights.
3. In Exodus 20:9-11 Israel is commanded to labor six days, because Jehovah made heaven and earth in six days.
4. The last three days were certainly ordinary days, for they were determined by the earth’s relation to the sun and if they were ordinary days why weren’t the others?

How is man “\_\_\_\_\_”?

- A spiritual being – able to commune with God
- A rational being – able to think, understand, and create (with knowledge)
- A moral being – with righteousness & holiness  
Eccles.7:29; Eph.4:24; Col.3:10

Ecclesiastes 7:29 “This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes.”

Ephesians 4:24 “ ... put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

The basis of man’s \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ – exercising dominion; ruling over creation for God (Gen.1:28; 2:19; Psalm 8)

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 39ff.

# GOD MADE COVENANT

First Covenant: "Covenant of Works" (Genesis 2:15-17)

\_\_\_\_\_ : God and Adam  
Adam - representative of mankind

**Hosea 6:7** "Like Adam,  
they have broken the  
covenant— they were  
unfaithful to me there."

\_\_\_\_\_ : Perfect obedience  
(relationship was a gift, maintenance based on obedience)  
Not eat of one tree (probationary test)

\_\_\_\_\_ : Death, if disobeyed  
Implied: Life, if obeyed ... "Covenant of Life"

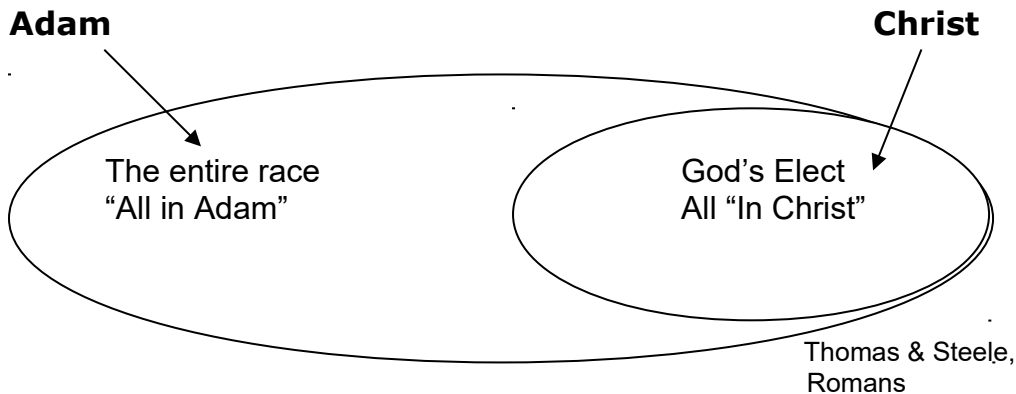
\_\_\_\_\_ : Tree of Life ... therefore sometimes called the Covenant of Life

Consequences of Adam's Fall:

- Earth cursed – labor by sweat of brow  
Romans 8:22 "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time."
- Pain in childbirth (*agree, ladies?*)
- All subject to disease, decay, and death (Rom.3:23; Heb.9:27)
- All by nature, children of wrath (Eph.2:3)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Romans 5:12-21**

**Each represented His people:**



How can all men stand condemned for what Adam did?

Adam was man's representative:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ - we all descend from him (Acts 17:26)
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ - legally by covenant arrangement with God

First Adam (12)

Last Adam (14)

One trespass; one man's  
Disobedience (18,19)

One man's obedience  
(15,16, 17,18,19)

Sin, death, condemnation  
(12,14,15,16,17,18,19,21)

Grace, righteousness, life  
(15,16,17,18,19,21)  
Thomas & Steele, Romans

We inherit both the **GUILT** and the **CORRUPTION** (nature) of Adam's sin  
*We are not sinful because we sin, we sin because we are sinful (Eph.2:3).*

Those "in Christ" inherit both the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ!  
Justification

~~Sanctification~~

Second Covenant: " \_\_\_\_\_ " (Genesis 3:15ff.)

First promise of a Redeemer ... occurred in the context of Covenant breaking  
This second Covenant imbedded in the first ... Covenant repair ...

#### Why gracious?

- Initiative of God alone
- Not required of Him
- Restored man to a relationship again:  
From enmity to friendship ...

Conditions for Receiving Life in Covenant of Grace ...

Our Representative met requirements of covenant of works ...

so God - both just and justifier of all who exercise faith (Rom. 3:26)

Galatians 3:10-14

"All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." 11 Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."

1. Christ fulfilled all righteousness - Rom.5:18, 19

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ - kept law perfectly (Heb.4:15; 5:8, 9)
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ - sacrifice, paid penalty (1 Pet.3:18; 2 Cor.5:21)

2. We exercise faith in Him, by the inner working of the Holy Spirit - Eph.2:8, 9

### **THE ESSENCE OF THE COVENANT**

The promise:

*"To be God to you and to your descendants after you, and you will be My people." Genesis 17:7*

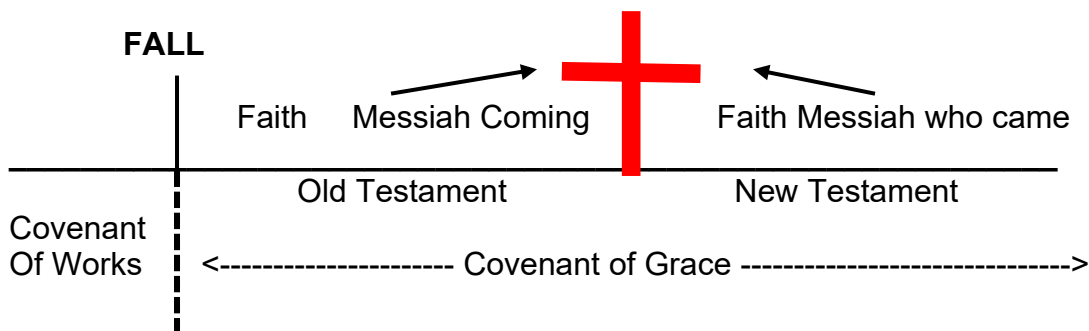
Promise of \_\_\_\_\_ with God

A restored relationship of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

"God dwelling in the midst of His people"

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Garden           | - Gen. 3:8        |
| 2. Tabernacle       | - Exod. 25:8      |
| 3. Temple           | - 1 Kings 6:11-14 |
| 4. Immanuel         | - Mt. 1:23        |
| 5. Word             | - John 1:14       |
| 6. Holy Spirit      | - John 14:16,17   |
| 7. Our Bodies       | - 1 Cor. 6:19,20  |
| 8. Church           | - 2 Cor. 6:16     |
| 9. New Heaven/Earth | - Rev. 21:3       |

One everlasting Covenant of Grace ... administered differently in Old / New Testaments.



Salvation always been by grace through faith & never by works (Heb.11:6, 13).

Structure or Paradigm of Covenant Making ... Hittite Suzereignty Treaties

Genesis 17

1. Preamble ... "I am God Almighty ... "
2. Stipulations ... "Walk before me and be perfect"
3. Transcript of Blessing and Cursing ... not developed until Mosaic period ... Deuteronomy 28
4. Ratifying Sacrament ... Genesis 15 ... sacrifice ...  
Genesis 17 ... circumcision

### **APPLICATION:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ... Genesis 15:8 "But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?" SEE **HEBREWS 6:13-20**



2. Provides for a salvation that is both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
3. Emphasizes the \_\_\_\_\_ aspect of our salvation ... God marries us in Covenant ... binds himself to us and us to him. God is by nature a covenant maker ... a safe relater. This covenantal thing creates a COMMUNITY ... we swept individually and collectively into the covenant of the Trinity.