

The background of the slide is a blurred, high-angle photograph of a document with Hebrew text. The text is arranged in columns and is out of focus, creating a sense of depth and historical context. The colors are muted, with a lot of greys and light browns.

# Westminster Confession

## Topics for Discussion

# Summary [Ordo Salutis]

## Balancing the Tension Between Doctrines

### The Visible Church

#### Invisible Church [Elect]

1. Effectual Calling
2. Regeneration
3. Conversion
4. Justification
5. Adoption
6. Sanctification
7. Glorification

This is the Ordo Salutis or  
“Order of Salvation”



#### Hypocrites

- A. General Calling
- B. Unregenerate
- C. Unrepentant
- D. Self-Justified/Works
- E. Universalist or Cultic
- F. Bad Fruits
- G. Material Prosperity

From time-to-time the Elect may  
exhibit the traits of the hypocrites

# Westminster Confession

## Historical Background

- In 1534, Henry VIII declared himself Supreme Head of the Church of England, breaking ties with the Roman Catholic Church
  - The reigning pontiff had excommunicated him for his divorcing Catherine of Aragon in 1533
  - Despite his fallen motives, he initiated the Reformation in England
- In 1604, King James authorized an English version of the Bible which was then published in 1611, making the Bible accessible to a wide range of people (not just Latin trained clergy)
- In 1643, the English Parliament convened a group of clergy to meet at Westminster Abbey to develop the worship, doctrine, discipline, and governance of the Church of England
- In 1646, the Westminster Assembly, clerical representation from the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland (including Congregationalists and Puritans) completed the Westminster Confession
- The Westminster Confession became and remains the 'subordinate standard' of doctrine in the Church of Scotland, and has been influential within Presbyterian churches worldwide

# Westminster Confession

## American Revisions

- Early History:
  - The first American Presbyters were New England Congregationalists (Puritans)
  - In 1716, the first American Synod met in Philadelphia
  - In 1729, the Philadelphia Synod ratified the Westminster Confession as its doctrinal standard
- The American Revision: Mostly as a result of the American Revolutionary War, the American Revision of 1787–1789 removed from the Confession and the Catechisms mention of certain duties of the civil government in relationship to the church
  - Reflects the American tendency to separate Church and State
  - Also removed explicit identification of the Pope as the Antichrist (XXV,6)
- Presbyterian Church of America (PCA): In December 4-7, 1973, the PCA adopted the same Confession and Catechisms as those that were adopted by the first American Presbyterian Assembly of 1789, with two minor exceptions:
  - The deletion of strictures against marrying one's wife's kindred (XXIV,4)
  - The reference to the Pope as the antichrist (XXV,6)

# Westminster Confession (1646)

## Chapters 1-15

Chapter I	Of the Holy Scripture
Chapter II	Of God, and of the Holy Trinity
Chapter III	Of God's Eternal Decree
Chapter IV	Of Creation
Chapter V	Of Providence
Chapter VI	Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and the Punishment thereof
Chapter VII	Of God's Covenant with Man
Chapter VIII	Of Christ the Mediator
Chapter IX	Of Free Will
Chapter X	Of Effectual Calling
Chapter XI	Of Justification
Chapter XII	Of Adoption
Chapter XIII	Of Sanctification
Chapter XIV	Of Saving Faith
Chapter XV	Of Repentance unto Life
Chapter XVI	Of Good Works

# Westminster Confession (1646)

## Chapters 16-33

Chapter XVII	Of the Perseverance Of the Saints
Chapter XVIII	Of Assurance Of Grace and Salvation
Chapter XIX	Of the Law Of God
Chapter XX	Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty Of Conscience
Chapter XXI	Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day
Chapter XXII	Of Lawful Oaths and Vows
Chapter XXIII	Of the Civil Magistrate
Chapter XXIV	Of Marriage and Divorce
Chapter XXV	Of the Church
Chapter XXVI	Of the Communion Of Saints
Chapter XXVII	Of the Sacraments
Chapter XXVIII	Of Baptism
Chapter XXIX	Of the Lord's Supper
Chapter XXX	Of Church Censures
Chapter XXXI	Of Synods and Councils
Chapter XXXII	Of the State Of Men after Death and the Resurrection Of the Dead
Chapter XXXIII	Of the Last Judgment

# Of Free Will

## Chapter 9

- I. God has endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined good, or evil. [Jam 1:13-14]
  - *Human beings are free in that they are not coerced to choose good or evil [Job 2:10]*
  - *God tempts no one [Jam 1:13]*
- II. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom, and power to will and to do that which was good and well pleasing to God [Gen 1:26]; but yet, mutably, so that he might fall from it. [Gen 2:16]
  - *After the Fall [Gen 3], human beings retained their freedom to choose good or evil*
  - *Genesis 4:6-7 - The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."*
- III. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation [Rom 5:6, 8:7]: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good [Rom 3:10], and dead in sin [Eph 2:1; Col 2:13], is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto [John 6:44,65].
  - *Although we have the liberty to choose to do good, we no longer have the ability to choose good because of our fallen condition. Instead of choosing good, we choose evil because of our inability to do good*
  - *Therefore, we are individually and collectively responsible for the evil we do*

# Of Free Will

## Chapter 9 (Continued)

IV. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage under sin; [John 8:34] and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; [Rom 6:19] yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he does not perfectly, or only, will that which is good, but does also will that which is evil [Rom 7:15, Gal 5:17].

- *Romans 6:17-18* But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.
- *Romans 7:18* For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.
- *Human beings are Totally Depraved, but this depravity is Total in Extent but not in Effect*

V. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone in the state of glory only [Ezek 36:26-27].

- *Ezekiel 36:26-27* And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

# Justification

## Chapter 11

- I. Those whom God effectually calls, He also freely justifies; [Rom 8:30] not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.
  - Calling means *Effectual Calling* - those regenerated and converted
  - *Justification is by faith alone, BUT faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit and such a gift is the result of God's grace towards those who He has chosen from the beginning of the world*
  - *Ephesians 1:4-5 ... even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,*
- II. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but works by love.
  - *These three remain: faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love [1 Cor 13:13]*
  - *Thus, we should understand that faith is the instrument of God's justification, not the result of a person's will towards gaining justification*

# Justification

## Chapter 11 (Continued)

- III. Christ, by His obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real and full satisfaction to His Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, in as much as He was given by the Father for them; and His obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead; and both, freely, not for any thing in them; their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice, and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.
- IV. God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did, in the fullness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification: nevertheless, they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit does, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them.
- *Christians cannot say that they had been justified before coming to intimate knowledge of Christ, for although their salvation is God's plan, its execution occurs in His time*
  - *The timing of this application of the Holy Spirit is conditioned upon God alone*

# Justification

## Chapter 11 (Continued)

- V. God does continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified; and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.
- *1 Corinthians 5:1-5 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.*
  - *1 Corinthians 11:27-30 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.*
- VI. The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament [Gen 15:6].

# Adoption

## Chapter 12

- I. All those that are justified, God vouchsafes, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption [Eph 1:5], by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God [Rom 8:17], have His name put upon them [2 Cor 6:18], receive the spirit of adoption [Rom 8:15], have access to the throne of grace with boldness [Eph 3:12], are enabled to cry, Abba, Father [Rom 8:15], are pitied [Psalm 103:13], protected [Prov 14:26], provided for [Matt 6:32], and chastened by Him as by a Father [Heb 12:6]: yet never cast off [Lam 3:31], but sealed to the day of redemption [Eph 4:30]; and inherit the promises [Heb 6:12], as heirs of everlasting salvation [1 Pet 1:3-4].
  - *Romans 8:14-19* For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs- heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.
  - *Revelation 21:7* The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.
  - *We are sealed by the Holy Spirit or "engaged" to Christ by the Holy Spirit. We have foretaste of the promises to come, but they have not yet been consummated until the marriage of the Lamb*

# Perseverance of the Saints

## Chapter 17

- I. They, whom God has accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.
  - *Matthew 7:21-23* "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'
- II. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which arises also the certainty and infallibility thereof.
- III. Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

# Assurance of Grace and Salvation

## Chapter 18

- I. Although hypocrites and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God, and estate of salvation (which hope of theirs shall perish): yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may, in this life, be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.
  - *Matthew 7:13-23* "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

# Assurance of Grace and Salvation

## Chapter 18 (Continued)

- II. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God [Rom 8:16], which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.
- *Our certainty comes not from ourselves and our human judgment, but rather from the Person of God through His Promises revealed in the Scriptures*
  - *We do not declare ourselves children of God, but rather we witness that we are children of God through the Holy Spirit who Himself bears witness*
- III. This infallible assurance does not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

# Assurance of Grace and Salvation

## Chapter 18 (Continued)

- IV. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light: yet are they never so utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart, and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may, in due time, be revived; and by the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair.

# The Church

## Chapter 25

- I. The catholic or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of Him that fills all in all.
- II. The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.
  - *Visible Church: "Starting around the 4th century - the expression "Visible Church" was referred to by theologians, not to a building, but to the members on the rolls of a local church. In other words, all persons who are members of a local church are considered to be a part of the visible church." [www.reformationtheology.com]*
  - *Members of the Visible Church are set aside by their public confession*
  - *However, there is a mixture of "wheat and tares" in the Visible Church, so Church membership does not guarantee or seal one's Election*
- III. Unto this catholic visible Church Christ has given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and does, by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto.
  - *Despite its imperfections, God has ordained the Visible Church to minister to the Invisible Church, the true Israel of God*

# The Church

## Chapter 25 (Continued)

- IV. This catholic Church has been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular Churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the Gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.
- V. The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated, as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to His will.
- VI. There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalts himself, in the Church, against Christ and all that is called God.
- *Matthew 25:31-32* When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
  - *Do not presume to take the Judgment Seat of Christ*