

Lutheran
Confessions

Formula of Concord: Epitome, XI: God’s
Eternal Foreknowledge and Election

...7. This Christ calls to Himself all sinners and promises them rest, and He is in earnest [seriously wills] that all men should come to Him and suffer themselves to be helped, to whom He offers Himself in His Word, and wishes them to hear it and not to stop their ears or [neglect and] despise the Word. Moreover, He promises the power and working of the Holy Ghost, and divine assistance for perseverance and eternal salvation [that we may remain steadfast in the faith and attain eternal salvation].

8. Therefore we should judge concerning this our election to eternal life neither from reason nor from the Law of God, which lead us either into a reckless, dissolute, Epicurean life or into despair, and excite pernicious thoughts in the hearts of men, for they cannot, as long as they follow their reason, successfully refrain from thinking: If God has elected me to salvation, I cannot be condemned, no matter what I do; and again: If I am not elected to eternal life, it is of no avail what good I do; it is all [all my efforts are] in vain anyway.

9. But it [the true judgment concerning predestination] must be learned alone from the holy Gospel concerning Christ, in which it is clearly testified that *God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all, and that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and believe in the Lord Christ.* Rom. 11, 32; Ezek. 18, 23; 33, 11; 2 Pet. 3, 9; 1 John 2, 2.

10. Whoever, now, is thus concerned about the revealed will of God, and proceeds according to the order which St. Paul has observed in the Epistle to the Romans, who first directs men to repentance, to knowledge of sins, to faith in Christ, to divine obedience, before he speaks of the mystery of the eternal election of God, to him this doctrine [concerning God’s predestination] is useful and consolatory.

11. However, that *many are called and few chosen*, Matt. 22, 14, does not mean that God is not willing to save everybody; but the reason is that they either do not at all hear God’s Word, but wilfully despise it, stop their ears and harden their hearts, and in this manner foreclose the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost, so that He cannot perform His work in them, or, when they have heard it, make light of it again and do not heed it, for which [that they perish] not God or His election, but their wickedness, is responsible. [2 Pet. 2, 1ff; Luke 11, 49. 52; Heb. 12, 25f.]

... In Him we are to seek the eternal election of the Father, who has determined in His eternal divine counsel that He would save no one except those who know His Son Christ and truly believe on Him. Other thoughts are to be [entirely] banished [from the minds of the godly], as they proceed not from God, but from the suggestion of the Evil Foe...

13. Besides, we should use the greatest diligence to live according to the will of God, and, as St. Peter admonishes, 2 Pet. 1, 10, *make our calling sure*, and especially adhere to [not recede a finger’s breadth from] the revealed Word: that can and will not fail us.

14. By this brief explanation of the eternal election of God His glory is entirely and fully given to God, that out of pure mercy alone, without all merit of ours, He saves us according to the purpose of His will; besides, also, no cause is given any one for despondency or a vulgar, wild life [no opportunity is afforded either for those more severe agitations of mind and faintheartedness or for Epicureanism].

(Bente, F., *Concordia Triglotta*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997).

Put it into Practice

Prayer

Grant, we implore You, merciful Lord, to Your faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve You with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN** (*Collect for Trinity 20*)

Word of God: St. Matthew 22:1-14 (on back)

Questions to Ponder in Prayer

- Note: The phrase “The kingdom of heaven/God” seeks to describe...
 - Not the way God works at a place called heaven(Lk 17:20-21)
 - But the way God works in the one holy Christian Church for all time (John 3:5, Rom 14:17, Psalm 103:9—God’s throne is in heaven).
- “...a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.” Examine the Old Testament imagery that would surely have come to mind.
 - King =LORD 1 Sam 12:12, 8:6-7; Ps 2:6, 24:7, 44:4, 47:5-7, Zech 9:9
 - Meal/Banquet = Ex 12-Passover, 24:9-11; Is 25:6, 55:1-3; Prov 9:1-6
 - Wedding =Ps 45 also intro; Jer 2:32; Hos 3:1-5; Gen 2:24, Is 54:6
 - Son =Ex 4:22 Israel; Dt 32:6; Is 9:6; Jer 31:9, Hos 11:1
 - Garments(or lack of) =Gen 2:25, 3:7, 21; 9:22-27, Is 20:3-5
- To whom did the king first send his servants? (v.2,8) What was their reaction? (v. 3)
- Once again, to whom did this gracious king send his servants? (v.4,8) Why did the King do that? They had already refused his invitation.
- Who had advanced notice of Christ’s coming?
- Some of that first group called “the rest” got violent. How did they treat the servants because of the invitation? The King’s reaction?
- How does the King deal with both parts of that first group? (v.7)
- Now, who does the King invite?(v.9-10) Is anyone excluded?
- In what sense are these Christians “good” and “bad”? (1Jn 1:8)
- The host would provide appropriate wedding garments for a royal feast. What did the man say who refused to wear what had been provided?
- What is the provided wedding garment? (Rev 7:13-14, Gal 3:26-27)
- According to this parable, why can’t the phrase, “For many are invited, but few are chosen,” mean God doesn’t really want to save all people? (See 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Ths 2:14 also see the section 11 to the left.)
- By nature, we are unable to accept God’s invitation(1 Cor 2:14), thus we are not saved by a human decision(Jn 1:13). We are saved by the graciousness of God through the completed work of Christ who calls us by the Holy Spirit who creates faith in us that puts on Christ. See it here!

These questions have been put together to help you as you extend and apply tonight’s Scripture to your life.

6:30 PM “Learn by Heart”
Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...

Hymn “**Thine Honor Rescue Righteous Lord**” **ASBH**
Lord’s Prayer, Intro and 1st Petition and Meaning
2 Thessalonians 2:13b-14

7:00 PM “Catechesis”
+ Opening Verses
“O Lord, open my lips...” p.224

+ Ascription of Praise
“Praise to you, O Christ. Alleluia.” p.225

Reading
St. Matthew 22:1-14 (back)

Hymn
“**Thine Honor Rescue Righteous Lord**”
(Augustana Service Book, insert)

Catechesis on... (back)
St. Matthew 22:1-14
Liturgy
Catechism

+ The Suffrages insert
from ASBH Prayer Office Supplement
Kyrie
Lord’s Prayer
Versicles
Psalm 130 or Psalm 51
Versicles
Collects
Collect for Peace
Benedicamus
Benediction
R. AMEN

Catechesis on St. Matthew 22:1-14

1And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: 2“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.”’ 5But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. 7But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ 10So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. 13Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14For many are called, but few are chosen.” (NKJV)

The Kingdom of Heaven=The Church

“We do not concede to the papists that they are the church, for they are not. 2 Nor shall we pay any attention to what they command or forbid in the name of the church, for, thank God, a seven-year-old child knows what the church is, namely, **holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd.** 3 So children pray, “I believe in one holy Christian church.” Its holiness does not consist of surplices, tonsures, albs, or other ceremonies of theirs which they have invented over and above the Holy

Scriptures, but it consists of the Word of God and true faith.” (Smalcald Articles, III, XII).

Man’s Perverse Will

39 This would also overturn and destroy for us the foundation, namely, that **the Holy Spirit wills to be certainly present with and efficacious and active through the Word when it is proclaimed, heard, and meditated upon....** 40 On the contrary, as God has ordained in his counsel that the Holy Spirit would call, enlighten, and convert the elect through the Word and that he would justify and save all who accept Christ through true faith, so he has also ordained in his counsel that he would harden, reject, and condemn all who, when they are called through the Word, spurn the Word and persistently resist the Holy Spirit who wants to work efficaciously in them through the Word. 41 In this sense “many are called, but few are chosen,” for few accept the Word and obey it; **the majority despise the Word and refuse to come to the wedding. The reason for such contempt of the Word is not God’s foreknowledge but man’s own perverse will, which rejects or perverts the means and instrument of the Holy Spirit which God offers to him through the call** and resists the Holy Spirit who wills to be efficaciously active through the Word, as Christ says, “How often would I have gathered you together and you would not!” (Matt. 23:37).

The Holy Spirit and the Word

“On the other hand, it is correct to say that in conversion, through the attraction of the Holy Spirit, God changes stubborn and unwilling people into willing people, and that after conversion, in the daily exercise of repentance, the reborn will of man is not idle but cooperates in all the works which the Holy Spirit performs through us...

19 Prior to man’s conversion there are only two efficient causes, namely, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God as the Holy Spirit’s instrument whereby he effects conversion. Man should hear this Word, though he cannot give it credence and accept it by his own powers but solely by the grace and operation of God the Holy Spirit.” (FC Ep II, 17,19).

CATECHESIS ON ST. MATTHEW 22:1-14



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