

Key Teachings of the Christian Faith

Vision: Strengthen our faith by examining key teachings of Christianity

Creation for Salvation

- **Creation**

Key Scripture #1 – Hebrews 1:1-4

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, ***through whom also He made the world.*** 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and ***upholds all things by the word of His power.*** When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

1. The world was made through the Son (vs.2)
 - a. Faith fact: Everything was created through and for Him

Colossians 1:16

For **by Him all things were created**, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been **created through Him and for Him.**

2. All things are upheld by the word of His power. (vs.3)
 - a. Faith fact: Everything was created by the word of God, not made out of things which are visible.

Hebrews 11:3

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

- b. Faith fact: Everything was created by the spoken word of God; He spoke and it was done.

Psalm 33:6,9

6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
And by the breath of His mouth all their host.

9 For He spoke, and it was done;
He commanded, and it stood fast.

c. Faith fact: When the Son speaks the word, it is done.

Matthew 8:8-10,13

8 But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, **but just say the word**, and my servant will be healed. **9** "For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does *it*." **10** Now when Jesus heard *this*, He marveled and said to those who were following, "**Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.** **13** And **Jesus said** to the centurion, "Go; **it shall be done** for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that *very* moment.

Let's consider what the Westminster Confession says about creation.

Chapter IV

Of Creation

I. It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,^[1] for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness,^[2] in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.^[3]

II. After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female,^[4] with reasonable and immortal souls,^[5] endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image;^[6] having the law of God written in their hearts,^[7] and power to fulfil it;^[8] and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change.^[9] Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil;^[10] which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.^[11]

Westminster Creation Teaching #1

It pleased God to create everything for the manifestation of His glory through His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness.

Westminster Creation Teaching #2

God created all things out of nothing in the space of six days.

Westminster Creation Teaching #3

God created all things very good. Death was not the status quo.

Westminster Creation Teaching #4

God created man, male and female with reasonable and immortal souls. The economic division of roles does not infer that one being is inferior to another.

- **Providence**

Providence is inherently linked to creation. God creates and **sustains**.

Let's consider what the Westminster Confession says about providence.

Chapter V

Of Providence

I. God the great Creator of all things does uphold,^[1] direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things,^[2] from the greatest even to the least,^[3] by His most wise and holy providence,^[4] according to His infallible foreknowledge,^[5] and the free and immutable counsel of His own will,^[6] to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.^[7]

Look at Key Scripture #1 again.

d. Faith fact: God upholds all things.

Westminster Providence Teaching #1

God upholds, directs, disposes, and governs all creatures, actions, and things.

e. Faith fact: God gives life and breath and all things.

We do not live in a mechanical, clockwork universe set in motion by God in ages past. God continues to sustain and move all things. He is the prime mover. God is vital and necessary for the next moment to exist.

f. Faith fact: In Him we live and move and exist.

g. Faith fact: God has determined our appointed times and the boundaries of our habitation.

Let's look at the work of providence in the lives of God's own, special children.

God humbles His own children so they may depend upon Him more.

Chapter V Paragraph V of the Westminster Confession speaks about providence as it applies to the lives of His children.

Chapter V

Of Providence

V. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God does oftentimes leave, **for a season**, His own children to manifold temptations, and **the corruption of their own hearts**, to **chastise them for their former sins**, or to **discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled**;^[19] and, to **raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon Himself**, and to **make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin**, and for **sundry other just and holy ends**.^[20]

2 Chronicles 32:24-26

In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill; and **he prayed to the LORD**, and the LORD spoke to him and gave him a sign. **25 But Hezekiah gave no return for the benefit he received, because his heart was proud**; therefore wrath came on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. **26 However, Hezekiah humbled the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem**, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come on them in the days of Hezekiah.

- h. Faith fact: God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

James 4:6-10

But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, **“GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”** **7** Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. **8** Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. **9** Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. **10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.**

To understand more about this giving of grace, let's look at Paragraph VI from Chapter V of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Westminster Providence Teaching #2

God blinds and hardens wicked and ungodly people **by withholding His grace** and **sometimes** also **withdrawing their gifts**. In this way, He gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan.

God does not need to actively harden the hearts of sinners. Sinners, by nature (the nature of sin) harden their own hearts. God simply **withholds His grace**. When He withholds His grace, the sinner's heart is naturally hardened through their own decisions and actions.

Also, as a punishment for hardening their hearts, **God may withdraw the gifts which they had.**

Matthew 13:12

"For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

Westminster Providence Teaching #2

The wicked and ungodly harden themselves, even under the same means which God uses to soften others.

1 Peter 2:4-10

And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, **5** you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **6** For *this* is contained in Scripture:

"BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; *but for those who disbelieve,*

"THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*,"

8 and,

"A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE";

for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and *to this doom they were also appointed.*

9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, **so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him *who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*** **10** for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

Let us now consider how God's grace gives saving faith to those who soften.

Ephesians 2:4-10

4 But God, being **rich in mercy, because of His great love** with which He loved us, **5** even when **we were dead** in our transgressions, **made us alive** together with Christ (**by grace you have been saved**), **6** and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, **7** **so that** in the ages to come **He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness** toward us in Christ Jesus. **8** **For by grace you have been saved through faith;** and that not of yourselves, **it is the gift of God;** **9** not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. **10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

- i. Faith fact: **God resurrects** spiritually dead sinners to **make them alive** in Christ.
- j. Faith fact: God's saving work is **by grace** through faith.

- k. Faith fact: God displays **the surpassing richness of His grace** through kindness toward us. This grace is displayed both now and will be further displayed in the ages to come.

To understand more about this grace of saving faith, let's look at Paragraph I from Chapter XIV of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Chapter XIV *Of Saving Faith*

I. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls,[\[1\]](#) is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts,[\[2\]](#) and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word,[\[3\]](#) by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.[\[4\]](#)

Westminster Saving Faith Teaching #1

Saving faith is a work of the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of those who believe.

Saving faith is **a work of grace**. The words “grace” and “work” are properly joined together when **the work is performed by the Spirit of Grace**.

Westminster Saving Faith Teaching #2

This **work of the Spirit** is **ordinarily accomplished** through the **ministry of the Word**.

Westminster Saving Faith Teaching #3

This **work of the Spirit** is **strengthened and increased by the sacraments (baptism and Lord's supper) and prayer**.

1 Peter 2:1-3 – As Newborn Babies

[1](#) Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, [2](#) **like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,** [3](#) if you have **tasted the kindness** of the Lord.

1. Faith fact: We believers **grow in respect to salvation through the pure milk of the word**.

Note: **As/like** newborn babes – **we never outgrow this** – we are to **long for** the pure milk of the word.

Also note: If you are alive in Christ, you have **tasted the kindness** of the Lord.

Acts 20:32 – Paul speaking to the Ephesians' elders

[32](#) “And now I commend you **to God** and to **the word of His grace, which is able to build you up** and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.