

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD: THE GOD WHO DECREES

WCF and LBCF (3.1) says, "God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established; in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree."

I. It Is

Psalm 33:11 says, "The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations."

Isaiah 46:9b–11 says, "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,' ¹¹calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it."

Job 42:1–2 says, "Then Job answered the Lord and said: ²I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

II. It Is

Isaiah 37:26 says, "Have you not heard that I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass" (see also **Isaiah 46:9–11** cited above).

1 Corinthians 2:7 says, "But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory."

Ephesians 1:4 says, "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him."

Ephesians 3:11 says, "This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord"

2 Timothy 1:9 says, "who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began"

III. It Is Not Based on

WCF and LBCF (3.2) says, "Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions."

Acts 15:16–18 says, "After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, ¹⁷that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things ¹⁸known from of old."

Romans 9:10–13 says, "And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—¹²she was told, 'The older will serve the younger.' ¹³As it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'"

Romans 8:30 says, "For those whom he foreknew [seeing their faith in Christ] he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

IV. It Includes Every _____

How can we have confidence that God can bring his whole plan to its intended end?

Answer: He plans every detail.

Ephesians 1:11 says, "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will"

Proverbs 16:33 says, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord."

Matthew 11:25–26 says, "At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."

1 Peter 2:8 says, "They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do."

Proverbs 16:4 says, "The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble."

HOW CAN WE BE _____ AND HOW CAN GOD NOT BE?

Lamentations 3:37–38 says, "Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? ³⁸Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?"

1 John 1:5 says, "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

James 1:13 says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one."

Our responsibility is grounded in two things:

- 1) We act according to our _____.
- 2) We are _____ to our Creator.

Genesis 50:20 says, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."

Acts 2:23 says, "this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men."

Acts 4:27–28 says, "for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place."

Isaiah 10:5–19 says, "Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger; the staff in their hands is my fury! ⁶Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. ⁷But he does not so intend, and his heart does not so think; but it is in his heart to destroy.... ¹²When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the boastful look in his eyes. ¹³For he says: 'By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I have understanding....' ¹⁵Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it, or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it? As if a rod should wield him who lifts it, or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood! ¹⁶Therefore the Lord God of hosts will send wasting sickness among his stout warriors, and under his glory a burning will be kindled, like the burning of fire."

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF A GOD WHO DECREES

1. The Gospel Is Not _____

Revelation 13:8 says, "... everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain."

Acts 2:23 says, "this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men."

Acts 4:27–28 says, "for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place."

Ephesians 1:3–5 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will."

2. The Certainty of God's _____

Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?"

Hebrews 6:13–20 says, "¹³For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, ¹⁴saying, 'Surely I will bless you and multiply you.' ¹⁵And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. ¹⁶For people swear by something greater than

themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. ¹⁷So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, ¹⁸so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. ¹⁹We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Romans 8:28–30 says, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."

We see three promises from this passage:

1. Promise that all things work _____.
2. Promise of our _____.
3. Promise of our _____ and _____.

Rejoice! Our God has the power, wisdom, and authority to accomplish what he has said!