

We know of several, including the return of Jesus Christ on judgment day. The Bible says all of God's decrees will be accomplished. *The LORD of hosts has sworn: As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand* (Isaiah 14:24). And, just in case you were wondering, the opposite is also true. Nothing will happen apart from God's command (Lam 3:37).

#### Discussion Questions

- How does knowing God has decreed future events bring you comfort and peace?
- What world events might happen in your future? Are any of them unknown to God?
- Jesus is coming back to judge the world and the wicked. Does this bring you comfort? Why or why not?

#### **Day 5 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse**

There used to be a show called “Are You Smarter than a 5<sup>th</sup> Grader?” where adult contestants would compete to answer questions about things children are taught in school. By the end of the show, most people had to admit they were not “smarter than a 5<sup>th</sup> grader.” Our knowledge is so limited, and yet sometimes we are tempted to think we can know the hidden things of God. Through scripture, God has revealed to us what He wants us to know about the world and life and particularly everything we need for saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. We should want to know everything he has revealed to us in His Word, but we should also recognize the limits of what God has revealed. Deut 29:29 says *The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.* God's decree for our future is a mystery to us, and our curiosity about the hidden things of God can distract us from what He has clearly told us. God's Word is what leads and guides us into truth. We need to listen to the Word preached and seek to understand it. As Psalm 119:105 says *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* Praise God that He has revealed himself to you, and purpose in your heart to be content with that knowledge, even in the midst of life's uncertainties.

#### Discussion Questions

- What kinds of things in the future do you wonder about? Are you content to trust God with those things?
- How much time and effort do you put into learning what God has already revealed in His Word?

# Baptist Catechism

## Family Worship Guide



### West Oaks Baptist Church

(in preparation for Sunday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023)

### Baptist Catechism Question #10

**Q:** What are the decrees of God?

**A:** *The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.*

#### Suggested Memory Verse

Isaiah 46:10 declaring 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,' (ESV)

## Day 1 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Does God control all things--past, present, future--including those who belong to him? This is a logical question when we consider that God is all present, all knowing, and all powerful. Worldly men desiring riches or power would give anything to know the future, let alone control it. But, God is not like men. What does Scripture say about God's decrees? A decree is an authoritative order having the force of law. God commands His creation but also has the power and authority to carry out those commands. Chapter 3 of the 1689 confession says of God's decrees, "From all eternity God decreed everything that occurs, without reference to anything outside himself." In Isaiah, God describes himself as *declaring 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* (Is 46:10). God has pre-determined all future events according to His own counsel, so nothing comes by chance (Eph 1:11 & Proverbs 16:33). Your life is not an accident. You have been placed into your family, in this particular time period, and with your own particular context, by God and for a purpose. Scripture says those who belong to God have been created to do good works before they were even born (Eph 2:19). Even man's salvation has been decreed, as we see in Paul's description of Christians as *vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory* (Rom 9:23).

### Discussion Question

- Have you ever seen people try to tell the future? What are they missing?
- Are there other people who make decrees in our world? Should we follow them?
- What do you think about God's decrees and the idea that nothing is by chance?
- This doctrine can evoke many different emotions in people. Why do you think that is?

## Day 2 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Does God control the wicked and their future? Many people believe that religion is a personal matter, and that if they do not choose to follow or believe in God, then God does not control them in any way. But, we see in scripture that God controls everything including wicked men. God even uses the wicked to make things go according to His plan. Acts 2:23 talks about how Jesus, the Son of God, was *delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God*, and crucified and killed by lawless men. Like everything in creation, wicked men fall under God's control and decrees, and He has ordained them for destruction (Jude 4). As created beings, we don't have any right to argue against a perfect, holy, and just God. Romans 9:20–21 says, *But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?* Paragraph 3 of the 1689 sums it up this way: "By God's decree, and for the demonstration of His glory, some human beings and angels are predestined (or foreordained) to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace. Others are left to live in their sin, leading to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice."

### Discussion Questions

- How would you respond to someone saying their salvation is a private matter?
- If God has decreed plans for the wicked in eternal hell, does that mean you don't have to share the gospel with them?
- Have you ever faced a situation when you felt pressured to be quiet about your faith in Jesus Christ?

## Day 3 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

What are the attributes of God's decrees? An attribute is defined as a quality or characteristic inherent in or ascribed to someone or something. What describes you? Are you tall or short? Do you have blue or brown eyes? Are you a Texan? In the Bible we learn that God's decrees are sovereign (supreme authority) and free (not under any outside control). Paul says in Eph 5:1 that God *predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will...* God determines things according to His own will and purpose. Do you ever try to put your will or what you want above others like your employer, your parents? Although some may try, no one can tell God what to do. His decrees are sovereign and free. His decrees are also eternal. Eph 1:4 talks about how we were chosen before the earth was created, before time was even made. God's decrees are perfectly wise (Eph 3:10-11), they are holy (Is 25:1), and they are impenetrable and unsearchable. Do you think you could break into a bank vault to get all the money and gold? While that may be possible, God's knowledge is so far superior that we can't ever know everything God knows. Even in eternity we won't know everything God knows (Rom 11:34). His decrees are absolute and unchanging (Job 23:13) and, ultimately, they are for His glory (Prov 16:4).

### Discussion Questions

- When we describe God it is important to only use scripture. Why?
- We are finite creatures, so how can we understand an infinite God?
- How do God's decrees bring Him glory?

## Day 4 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

We have learned about God's decrees and how special they are, but have you ever wondered whether all of God's decrees have been completed? In this week's memory verse, God says, *declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.* Let's focus on the "things not yet done." It's pretty cool to know that God is so powerful and infinite that he can declare things to come in the future. God's decree from ancient times included all of history as it has unfolded: the rise and fall of Rome, the space race and man landing on the moon, and more recent events like the war in Ukraine. More importantly, God also decreed and brought forth many events directly related to our redemption. As promised, He sent His only Son to live a sinless life and die on the cross for our sins, rising the third day in victory over death. So, what things has God decreed in eternity past that have not happened yet?