

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

God's decrees are amazing and unchanging, and it is God Himself who is bringing them about. They are beyond our full understanding, for *no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end* (Ecclesiastes 3:11). They are also certain. *Whatsoever God doth—nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it* (Ecclesiastes 3:14). And yet, we have the duty and the great privilege of studying God's decrees and seeking to participate with Him as He carries them out. Children often complain that a school subject is too hard or wonder why they have to learn it, but God has revealed Himself to us so that we *can* know Him better through His decrees. When my wife, Jennifer, and I were engaged, we spent hours on end together. We bought a book with 1001 questions to ask each other and would just sit and work our way through the list, one after another. We studied every look, movement, and word with intensity, why? To know. I wanted to know everything I could about this person God was giving me. How much more should we be eager to know God and willing to study His actions and decrees that we might know Him better? Referring to scripture, Psalm 111:2 says *They are sought of them that have pleasure therein.*

### Discussion Questions

- Do you feel like reading and studying God's word is a duty or a privilege? Explain.
- What have you learned in God's Word lately?
- Has it helped you to know Him better? In what way?

# Baptist Catechism Family Worship Guide



## West Oaks Baptist Church

(in preparation for Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023)

### Baptist Catechism Question #11

**Q:** How doth God execute his decrees?

**A:** *God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.*

#### Suggested Memory Verse

Daniel 4:35 ...and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth...

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

God's decrees are executed in the works of creation. Before the beginning of time God decreed whatsoever would come to pass, but when did God first begin to carry out those decrees? It was in creation. On the first page of the Bible we learn, "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). This was the first step toward all that God had purposed to accomplish in our world—the first of many amazing decrees fulfilled. So, before God sent His son to die on the cross, before He raised up King David or delivered Moses out of Egypt, before he called Abraham to father a nation, before all of that, God created. And he created some amazing things! Just consider the coconut headed sloth (which literally looks like it has a coconut for a head) or the screaming frog (whose shrill cry is deafening to hear), or the fact that the air we breathe has the perfect blend of oxygen and nitrogen. Although atheists insist this is all by chance, we know that it is by God's decree. And, at the end of the Bible we see that it was *for His pleasure they are and were created* (Rev. 4:11).

#### Discussion Question

- Why did God create you and all things?
- What is your favorite thing that God created?
- How do you think that particular thing brings glory to God or points to Christ?

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

On day one we talked about creation, but God's decrees are also executed in the works of providence. That is, God not only creates according to His will but he also continually works through His creation over time to bring about His will. He didn't just set the world up and walk away. He is actively interacting with it in physical and spiritual ways. In Daniel 4:35 we learn that *He doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth*. All around us, God is actively at work "behind the scenes" bringing about His will on earth and in heaven. The word "providence" first appears in the Old Testament in Gen. 22 in the account of Abraham taking his son up the mountain as a sacrifice. When Isaac asked about where they would get a sacrifice, it was said God would provide. *Providence*. Knowing what would be required to redeem sinful man, God provided for our ultimate needs in the sacrificial lamb of Christ. Through providence, He also provides everything needed to accomplish His will. *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose* (Romans 8:28).

#### Discussion Questions

- Have you ever thought about the relationship between "Providence" and "Provide"? Do you think about the things that happen in your day as being "provided" by God?
- What are some ways God has "worked things together for good" in your life?

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

As God works through providence, He has many tools at His disposal. He uses angels, who *do his commandments* (Psalm 103:20) to execute some of His decrees. Sometimes, He even uses wicked angels or demons to serve His own glory. In 1 Kings 22:22, we see reference to "lying spirits" put in the mouths of all the prophets. Or, consider the role Satan played in driving Judas to betray Jesus, unwittingly furthering God's plan for the crucifixion. It should be no surprise, then, that God also uses the actions of men to carry forth His decrees. In Isaiah 44:28, King Cyrus is described as "my shepherd" performing "all my pleasure" when he lets the exiled Israelites finally return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. When I (Shawn) was a kid, someone gave me a book by Frank Peretti. It was a fictional account of spiritual warfare and depicted people trying to live normal lives while wicked angels were trying to cause trouble for Christians and good angels were dispatched to engage the enemy and guard God's people. The story was made up, but spiritual warfare is real and reading that book caused the idea of God's providence to come alive for me. God uses both men and angels in this world to execute His decrees and they may not even be aware of it.

#### Discussion Questions

- Why do you think God uses men and angels to accomplish His will?
- Can a person serve God's purposes without meaning to? Can you think of any examples?
- Why is this a comfort for Christians?

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

God is not limited to angels or humans when working out His decrees. He also uses animals. Think of all the creatures that participated in God's decrees against the Egyptians during the plagues: flies, frogs, locusts. Isaiah 7:18 says *I will hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost parts of the rivers of Egypt*. Or, what about the time when God sent two she bears to attack a group of young people who had been rebelling against God and making fun of His bald minister? (See 2 Kings 2:23-25) At other times, though, God forgoes any instrument at all and simply acts directly to bring about His decrees. Rather than working through creation according to the laws of nature, God miraculously intervenes in history. A good example would be how God created the world *ex nihilo*, or out of nothing. No tools. No instruments. He just spoke. Another powerful example is our own salvation. Although God does use others to share the gospel and preach the Word, ultimately it is God alone who brings salvation to a sinner's heart. *Mine own arm brought salvation*, he says in Isaiah 63:5.

#### Discussion Questions

- Can you think of any other times in the Bible when God used an animal to bring about His plans?
- Why is it important that only God Himself does the work of salvation?
- Are you still trying to make yourself good enough for God? Or have you found rest in His providence?