

The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 3, Paragraph 1 – “Of God’s Decree”,
Message # 6 – “God not the Author of Sin”, Presented in the
Adult Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall,
on September 5th, 2021.

Paragraph 1 – “God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably(1), all things, whatsoever comes to pass(2); yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein(3); 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(4); in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree.”(5)

1) Proverbs 19: 21; Isaiah 14: 24-27; 46: 10, 11; Psalm 115: 3; 135: 6; Romans 9: 19

2) Daniel 4: 34, 35; Romans 8: 28; 11: 36; Ephesians 1: 11

3) Genesis 18: 25; James 1: 1; 1st John 1: 5

4) Genesis 50: 20; 2nd Samuel 24: 1; Isaiah 10: 5-7; Matthew 17: 12; John 19: 11; Acts 2: 23; Acts 4: 27, 28

5) Numbers 23: 19; Ephesians 1: 3-5

Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 7 – What are the Decrees of God?

Answer: “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.”

Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 8 – How doth God execute His Decrees?

Answer: God executes His decrees in the works of creation and providence.
(*Add – And Redemption also, through our Lord Jesus Christ*)

God has decreed all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein.

Now, at this session, I want to begin by asserting what the Bible clearly says, in regard to the following facts.

1st – God has Decreed all good and evil events –

Isaiah 45: 7 – “I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I the Lord do all of these things.”

Just as the Lord forms light and creates darkness, he also makes peace and creates calamity in His providentially ordering these things according to His purpose in the affairs of men.

Amos 3: 6 – “If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid?” “If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it?”

Here we see that just a trumpet is blown in a city, and as a result, the people in that city will be afraid; even so, for those who had fallen under the judgment of God, the calamity in their city will have come from Him, for it has been decreed by Him.

Jeremiah 32: 37-41 – “Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely.” “They shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them.” “And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.” “Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.”

In these verses you see the certainty of God’s ability according to His eternal purpose, to save His ancient people the Jews and to do them good ever afterward. Very specific actions are prophesied here; bringing them back to their own land, causing them to dwell safely. Making them His people once again after they had been desolate and under His judgments for so many years. They will be brought into the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He will give them one heart and one way; that of being Christians in the one Church of our Lord. He will do these things so that they will fear Him forever. He will do them for the good of them and their children after them. He will make an everlasting covenant with them which is spoken of particularly in Romans chapter 11, verse 27. And an essential part of this covenant with them will be that He will not turn away from doing them good. He will put His fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Him. And He will rejoice over to do them good. He will assuredly plant them in their own ancient land, and He will do so with all of His heart and with all of His soul. This is one of the most specific prophecies of God’s having determined, on the basis of His decrees, to do good to specific people, in all of the word of God.

2nd – God has ordained all Sinful acts, even though He is not the author of them, nor has fellowship in them.

Genesis 50: 15-20 – “When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, ‘Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him.’” “So they sent messenger to Joseph, saying, ‘Before your father died he commanded, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to Joseph: ‘I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.’” “Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God your father.” “And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.” “Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, ‘Behold, we are your servants.’” “Joseph said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?’” “But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”

So, very plainly we see that God ordained, He decreed, all the events related to Joseph’s brothers thinking evil things concerning him, and their doing evil things to him; selling him down to Egypt to be a slave. They thought that they would never see him again. They lied to their father to cover it up, and yet God we know, brought great good out of these evil actions in that He decreed that Joseph, even though he went through the trial of Potiphar’s wife trying to seduce him, and being thrown into prison by her husband when she lied about him because of his faithfulness to not lie with her, yet God was with Joseph, brought him out of prison at the right time, and raised him up to be 2nd in command to Pharaoh. And from that position, then, he was able to save many people alive, having rightly interpreted Pharaoh’s dream of the 7 years famine and having stored up grain like the sand on the seashore. God did not have fellowship with Joseph’s sinful brothers in any of their sinful thoughts or acts. But He did decree that good would come from these actions eventually, to Joseph, and to everyone Joseph was able to help.

