

## *From Your Pastor*

### *A Study of the Shorter Catechism*

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

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

**Scripture memory:** <sup>ESV</sup> **Ephesians 1:9-10:** "...Making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."

**An explanation:** Last week, we learned that the Eternal, Blessed, Bountiful and Boundless God, without the counsel or aid of anyone else, has appointed and determined all of history "according to the counsel of His will" or for His mere good pleasure (Eph. 1:9-10).

God's decrees are executed, or performed, or come to pass, or are realized in the works of creation and providence (Heb. 11:3; 1:3). The Eternally Blessed God, who had decreed according to His infallible foreknowledge from eternity past, decided to create space and time for His own glory, and to uphold and govern this creation wisely and powerfully with the goal of bringing all things together in Christ at the end of history (Eph. 1:9-10; cf. Isa. 46:10). The important distinction between God's works of creation and providence in the outworking of God's decree is that in creation God worked according to the Word of His power without the use of means, whereas in providence, He ordinarily uses secondary causes as tools or means in His sovereign hands to bring about His good plan (Acts 4:27-28).

God has not decreed anything because He saw it in the future; all of God's plans are "known from of old" (Acts 15:16-18) and are decreed "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). All of history unfolds the way it does from beginning to end "from Him and through Him and to Him...to Him be the glory," (Rom. 11:36), and "in order that God's purpose of election might continue" (Rom. 9:11), and absolutely nothing He has decreed can fail (Isa. 46:10; Dan. 4:35; Rom. 9:19). All things have been created by God and for God ultimately (Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11). The Lord has made all things for Himself... (Prov. 16:4a), and "in Him we live and move and have our very being" (Acts 17:28).

Yet even though God is all sovereign and is executing His purposes in history, He is in no way the author of sin (James 1:13, 17; 1 John 1:5), nor does His decree take away the will of the creature (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; Prov. 16:33). When men choose to act evil, they do so freely according to their own free will, and they will be judged for it. Mysteriously, (and wonderfully!) God uses even bad things for His glory and our good! (Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28; Job 42:5; Psa. 119:67, 71).

***Nothing that God has decreed shall fail. All things will glorify God and be for our good! Let us say joyfully with Jesus:***

***"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." - : <sup>ESV</sup> Mark 13:31***

**A prayer:** Thank you, dear Sovereign Lord, for ordaining all things, of creating all things, and upholding and governing all things by the Word of your power. Thank you, Merciful Lord of History, that I can trust you that all things that happen in my life are according to your will, and will be for the praise of your glorious grace...and my good!

**In Christ's love,  
Pastor Biggs**

*"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts.  
The latter glory of this house [Temple] shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts."*

**- Haggai 2:8-9**