

Reference: VARIOUS
Church: GRACE Date: 8/24/2011

God, His Decree and the Environment

Purpose: To review the character of God, the doctrine of His Decree and to see how this applies to a Biblical position on the environment.

1. Introduction

We will consider the Being of God from the Westminster Confession
Then look at His decree
And see how these help us to think Biblically about the environment.
Not dealing with them fully here; look at most relevant parts for our purposes

2. What does the Confession say about God?

There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, **almighty**, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; **working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory**; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, **not standing in need of any creatures which He hath made**, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, **of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleaseth**. In His sight all things are open and manifest, His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, **so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain**. He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands. To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them.

3. What is the doctrine of God's Decree?

God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass:

Ephesians 1:11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose **who works all things after the counsel of His will**.
Hebrews 6:17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the **unchangeableness of His purpose**, interposed with an oath,
Romans 9:18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

God has a plan

What does this tell us about God's plan?

It is a wise and holy plan – a good plan

When was it made?

Arises solely within God, not from need or outward persuasion.

It cannot be changed – why not?

It encompasses all things

4. Do we know what God's plan is?

Some of it we know - He has revealed it in His Word

What do we know about His plan from His Word?- (Highlights)

- ☐ He created all things for His glory
- ☐ Of all fallen man, He has chosen to save some
- ☐ He sent His Son to do so
- ☐ Others He chose to pass over
- ☐ His Son was put to death in the place of the elect
- ☐ He rose again, He ascended
- ☐ He will return to judge the living and the dead
- ☐ This earth will be destroyed by fire
- ☐ Devil and his angels to be thrown into fiery lake
- ☐ There will be a new heavens and a new earth
- ☐ Sin will be done away with.... etc.

The remainder we can only know when it comes to pass. **There is a future!**

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

5. Did God ordain sin?

yet in such a way that neither is God the author of sin,

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from God and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Why is it vital to state this?

6. Did God simply ordain what He foresaw?

yet hath He not decreed any thing because He foresaw it as future

Romans 9:11 for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, **not because of works** but because of Him who calls, 12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." 13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED." 14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! 15 For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." 16 **So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.** 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

Why is this important to establish?

7. Does God ordain the eternal destiny of men and angels?

Romans 9:22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And *He did so* to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

What does this mean in relation to the earth?

8. Conclusions

- ☐ God is Almighty
- ☐ He works all things according to His will and for His glory
- ☐ He is independent of all His creatures
- ☐ He is the fount of all being
- ☐ He has sovereign dominion over all creatures, disposes of them as He pleases
- ☐ Nothing is to Him contingent or uncertain
- ☐ Some Scriptures: Gen. 17:1, Rev. 4:8, Eph. 1:11, Acts 17:24–25, Rom 11:36, Rev. 4:11, 1 Tim. 6:15, Dan 4:25, 35, Acts 15:18, Ezek. 11:5.

- ☐ God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass:
- ☐ It is a holy, wise and good plan that God has freely made
- ☐ It is unchangeable and covers all things
- ☐ Its end is the glory of God
- ☐ We know some from what has been revealed
- ☐ We know some from what comes to pass
- ☐ He does not “ordain” what He foresees
- ☐ God’s decree includes sin
- ☐ But He is and cannot be the author of evil
- ☐ It includes the eternal destiny of men, women and angels
- ☐ Some Scriptures: Eph 1:11, Heb 6:17, Deut 29:29, 1:13, 1 John 1:5, Romans 9:11-23

How might these truths help us think of the environment?