

Theology Simply Explained — WSC7 “God Purposes All Things for His Glory”

Pastor walks his children through Westminster Shorter Catechism question 7—especially explaining how God purposes from all eternity, in Himself, for His glory, everything comes to pass—and how this is especially for our good.

Q7. What are the decrees of God? *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.*

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Shorter catechism question this week is what are the decrees of god?

And the answer is the decrease of god. R has eternal purpose. According to the council of his will whereby. For his own glory. He hath for ordained. Whatsoever comes to pass. A little bit of a quibble. With the question. What are the decrees of god? Um, We get the His eternal purpose, which is singular.

And so it might, well, have been to ask the question. What is the decree of god and have the answer begin? The degree of god is. The plural is actually related to The last line of the answer which is correct. He has four ordained whatsoever comes to pass or as Effusions 111, puts it.

He works all things according to the council of his will. And it's that whatsoever or all things even better from a season's 111. That is the plural so that we know. That whatever happens happens. Because god has willed it, because god has Ordained it. And so there are things that Uh, apply from god's character and that are proven out.

By god's promises and By the bible history and the rest of history. In fulfillment. And these these things that must belong to something. Uh, must belong to every event because god has willed it. Is what makes up the substance? Of the answer. The degrees of god are has eternal purpose.

Something that he purposes from outside of time. Now, we've recently in Romans 8, for instance, Noted that nothing in time can separate us from the love of god. That is in jesus christ. Our lord Because it's a love that is set upon us from outside of time. Or to put it with reference, not so much to time.

But to space and to wills to creatures. Nothing that is willed or done by the creature. Can ever undo that, which is willed or none by The creator. And so god's purpose. Is always an eternal purpose. It is not as if god has changing purposes as he says of himself.

Uh, he is not a man that he should lie or the son of a man. That he should change his mind. When? Scripture talks about god relenting, it talks about. Him changing his course of action as he had ordained to do. Because the creature had changed his course of action, as god had ordained, he would do And this is just something that we have to.

Uh submit ourselves to the reality of is that there are two wills operating gods and the creatures. And whereas the creatures evil will is really evil and is really a will. Yet. The creatures evil will is superintended by god's goodwill. And god's goodwill is really good. And really a will.

And so, Uh, weather a creature is willing good or willing evil. God is always willing good. And the two wills are operative at the same time. As joseph says to his brothers, you intended it. Got you intended it for evil but god intended it for good. But the difference is not just which will is superintending.

Which intention. Is the determinative intention of the outcome. The difference is also seen here in our Um, Answer. Is that god's purpose is eternal? And unchanging. He is as we have already confessed infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, not only in his being. But also in his wisdom. Also, in his faithfulness also, in his goodness.

And all of these things, therefore, Are tied to. The unchangeable purpose. Of god. He is god, who cannot lie? He is god who does not change his mind? So, the degrees of god are his eternal purpose. According to the council of his will now, this is actually a little bit redundant, isn't it?

Because if it's god's eternal purpose, There can be no other counselors. That determine the purpose. There can be no data points. That he must take into account and respond to. In what he purposes. Rather it is his purposes. That result in all of the other data points. As we were.

Attempting to understand those who he foreign you. He also predestined, we dealt with this idea. Of god, predestining. According to what he saw in the future. Which would not be a predestination at all. And of course, that was not what the word for new meant. It meant to know someone ahead of time.

That that there is an electing love an electing Knowing. Not a knowing about or a Uh, present collection of data. On god's part. And so, the Wisdom. That goes into the purpose of god is entirely his own. Wisdom. And the power that goes into the purposing of god is infinite.

He is not limited by something that he has to respond to. And so it is according to the council. Of his will. Now, there is something in the word council here. That. Does hint act, or remind us of the fact that god is triune That, although there be only one god, he does exist eternally.

In these three persons are these hype three hypastases? The father, the son. And the holy spirit, or The holy ghost. And so, In the love and adoration and fellowship and commitment, and delight of each of the persons in and two. One another, there is something of an intra-trinitarian council You remember, god has only one mind.

Only one will. Within God. And yet within that mind within that, will is something that comes Out of or is expressive of the proper relation. Of each of the persons to the others in what we call because it belongs to each person their personal. Properties. And this is why since it is according to the council.

Of his will according to this. Uh, intra Trinitarian singular, intention will desire purpose. That it is always for his own glory. Which is right, of course because god alone is God. And it would be wicked of him to purpose or to do anything that wasn't for his own glory.

Just as it would be wicked for us. To purpose or to do anything that isn't for god's glory. And yet. Because god is triune. The council of his will. Purposes. His glory, not in selfishness. Which would not be wrong for god. But even then in generosity in each of the other persons love for and delight In The other persons.

And so god. Generously desires, and purposes, and plans, according to his own glory, even within the godhead, but that also, it is generous unto us that he does all things. For his own glory. Because to be known by god and to know his glory, And to be loved by god and to love him who is all glorious.

So that we delight in him. He is our portion. He is our treasure. He is our pleasure. This is the highest good that any creature can have. And so it is actually generous. Of god unto us. That he does all things for his own glory. So that if we could just have by the grace of the holy spirit, A proper desire.

For the glory of god and all things. And if we could just have by the grace of the holy spirit, A proper confidence and certainty. That all things are unto his glory just as he has purposed it We would find ourselves fully satisfied and delighted with whatsoever. Comes to pass.

Even as god rejoices in his works. Which we will. Uh, consider at the end of psalm 104. This week. And so we know that it is for his own glory and therefore, it is also For the good of those who are being given. To be united to christ. And therefore in their union with the sun.

To be the adopted loving children of the father. And the Um, Delighted and holy temples. That our consecrated under the holy spirit. Uh, who dwells in them? And therefore, this is the great good of the believer. When we say, That. All things work together for good, for those who love god.

Who are therefore since they have been brought to love god. The call recording to his purpose. We were saying that their love for god, will eventually be perfected. Those whom he justified, he also glorified, conforming them to the image of his son. And, If we love god. Then the good that all things work together for.

Is not merely. Um, earthly comfort and pleasantness and health. The good that it all works together for is the expression of god's glory married to our desiring and perceiving and enjoying that glory. And that is why. Our blessedness will be. Forever. And unimaginable. Because although we be finite and ever increasing in our capacity for blessedness The object of our happiness of our blessedness is already to use.

And unhelpfully, temporal term is eternally to say it better. The object of our blessedness is eternally infinite. Which, by the way, not so much related to this question. Uh, but Um, Is one of the ways in which someone's blessing and heaven can be greater or less, because of our finitude, because we are finite and Although, we will enjoy him forever and increasingly so Uh, we will have different capacities.

And the more that The lord has grown us and does grow us. Uh, in glory, the difference in experience. Will be different as must be the case with creatures. Because creatures are not like the unchangeable creator. Uh, but back to the catechism answer here. When it says whereby for his own glory, we can insert with the delight of our hearts.

If we are believers and our unending always increasing good. Because the knowledge and delight knowledge of and delight in his glory is the believers great good. And so the answer. Or the question rather what are the decrees of god has the answer? The decrees of god are his eternal purpose.

According to the council of his will. Whereby for his own glory. He hath for ordained. Whatsoever. Comes to pass.