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- **Free:** God's decrees are free and sovereign, determined by the counsel of His own will. Charles Hodge again explains, "*God adopted the plan of the universe on the ground of His own good pleasure, for His own glory, and every subordinate part of it in reference to the whole. His decrees are free, therefore, in a far higher sense than that in which the ordinary purposes of men are free.*"³

Psalm 135:5-6: ⁵For I know that **the LORD is great, And that our Lord is above all gods.** ⁶**Whatever the LORD pleases, He does,** In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

Isaiah 46:10: ¹⁰**Declaring the end from the beginning** And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, "**My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.**"

Isaiah 40:13-14: ¹³Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has informed Him? ¹⁴**With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge, And informed Him of the way of understanding?**

Question #90: On what basis are God's decrees *free*? _____

- **Reflected in all things:** God's decree comprehends all events. Whatever God does and permits is according to His plan. Divine foreknowledge necessitates this. Since God knows the end from the beginning, nothing can happen that He did not know from eternity past. Therefore nothing happens that God did not intend. Since God is providentially controlling nature and history, His purposes and plans are perfectly and exclusively fulfilled.

Psalm 139:16: Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; And **in Thy book they were all written, The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.**

Matthew 10:29-30: ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet **not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.** ³⁰But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Isaiah 22:10-11: ¹⁰Then you counted the houses of Jerusalem, And you tore down houses to fortify the wall. ¹¹And you made a reservoir between the two walls For the waters of the old pool. But you did not depend on Him who made it, **Nor did you take into consideration Him who planned it long ago.**

³Hodge, 540.

Question #91: Explain in your own words how divine foreknowledge necessitates that God's decree comprehends all the events of human history. _____

- **Immutable:** God's decrees are perfect and therefore cannot change. This is to say that whatever God has determined will come to pass, because He has also determined the means by which they come to pass.

Jeremiah 4:28: For this the earth shall mourn, And the heavens above be dark, Because I have spoken, **I have purposed, And I will not change My mind, nor will I turn from it.**

Psalms 33:11: The **counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart** from generation to generation.

Question #92: What specific comfort do you derive from the fact that God's decrees are perfect and therefore cannot change? _____

- **Inclusive of the ends and the means:** God's decree ordains all of the means by which His purposes are established. Since God's purpose is being carried out in an infinitely complex world of causes and effects, His purposes include all of the causes and effects necessary to accomplish them. Clearly, His eternal plan includes all of the means by which His ends are attained. *The Westminster Confession of Faith (On Providence: articles 1, 2, 3)* explains:

1. God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

3. God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.

Consider how even the free choices of people ultimately accomplish the eternal purposes