

Theology - the doctrine of god term paper

[Religion](#), [God](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

How does the divine decree relate to the attributes of God?

Answer

The divine decrees regulate the operation of the attributes. The actions of God can no more be separated from the decrees of God than the actions of a man can be from his decisions. The divine decree relates only to God's operational extra or transitive acts. The divine decree, consequently, comprehends only those events that occur in time.

Application

In our Christian walk, we must always take into consideration the fact that the attributes of God are a direct reflection upon events in time. As we strive to be good Christians, we must be aware of the temporal events around us. As life passes us by, we should feel secure in the knowledge that God is in charge of our day to day lives and only wants the best for us.

Is the divine decree a necessary condition of divine foreknowledge? Do you agree with Shedd's analysis? Why or why not?

Answer

YES. The divine decree is the necessary condition of divine foreknowledge. I agree with Shedd's analysis. As long as anything remains un-decreed, it is contingent and fortuitous. It may or may not happen. In this state of things, there cannot be knowledge of any kind. The most important aspect of the divine decree is that it brings all things that come to pass in space and time into a plan. There can be no system of the universe, if there is no one divine

purpose that systematizes it. I agree because a thought must precede an action even in human circumstances. Without the forethought, any action or event cannot exist because there was no thought to create it.

Application

God ordained and gave purpose to our lives. God brings about all things that happen in our lives. Although these events are ordained by God, it is up to us to exercise our power of free will to do the right thing. God has a plan for our lives and we must trust that God will not expose us to life events that we cannot handle.

What are the four characteristics of the divine decree? For the application, how would you explain the importance and relevance of each of these four to a person in your church?

Answer

The divine decree is founded in wisdom, the divine decree is eternal, and the divine decree is universal. The divine decree is immutable. I would explain the decree in the following manner. The divine decree is founded on wisdom because it denotes God's wise insight and knowledge, in the light of which he forms his determination.

Application

The divine decree is eternal. This characteristic has been defined as what has been said under attributes respecting the simultaneousness of the eternal, as distinguished from the gradations and sequences of the temporal.

The divine decree is universal. It includes “ whatsoever comes to pass,” be it physical or moral, good or evil.

The divine decree is immutable. There is no defect in God in knowledge, power, and veracity. His decree cannot therefore be changed because of a mistake of ignorance or of inability to carry out His decree or of unfaithfulness to His purpose.

How does Shedd reconcile the alleged contradiction between the divine decree and human freedom?

Answer

There is no contradiction between the divine decree and human liberty, provided the difference between an infinite and a finite being is steadily kept in mind. God, while knowing that the human will is free in every act, knows the whole series of its free acts in one intuition. Man does not. This additional element in divine knowledge arises from that peculiarity in divine consciousness just alluded to. All events within the sphere of human freedom, as well as that of physical necessity, are simultaneous to God. Man's voluntary acts are not a series for the divine mind, but are all present at once and therefore are all of them certain to God. The notion of a decree is not contradictory to that of free agency, unless decree is defined as compulsion and it be assumed that God executes all his decrees by physical means and methods. No one can demonstrate that it is beyond the power of God to make a voluntary act of man an absolutely certain event

Application

As Christians, we are free to walk in the liberty that God gives us. Our acts are not controlled by God but they are known by God. Our mind is not God's mind but God knows what we will do before we do it. If we keep walking with Christ, we will do the right thing.

What is the distinction between the efficacious and permissive aspects of the decree?

Answer

The efficacious decree determines the event: (a) by physical and material causes; such events are the motions of the heavenly bodies and the phenomena of the material world, b) by an immediate spiritual agency of God upon the finite will in the origin and continuance of holiness. The permissive decree relates only to moral evil. Sin is the sole and solitary object of this species of decree. It renders the event infallibly certain, but not by immediately acting upon and in the finite will. The permissive decree is a decree (a) not to hinder the sinful self-determination of the finite will and (b) to regulate and control the result of the sinful self-determination.

Application

Since the efficacious determines the physical events in our Christian lives, we are to respond to these events in holiness. Regardless of the physical situation, God helps us in becoming creatures in Christ. On the other hand, our finite actions are not hindered by our inability to follow God's will. We are certain to sin. However, God gave us His Son as a holy example.

How does this distinction help us understand the role of sin in the decree of God?

Answer

God is not the author of sin but God decrees sin. God does not choose to prevent sin as this would violate human liberty. This is a mystery beyond human comprehension. There must be an unknown method that allows sin to happen. This is only a hypothesis and can be classified as a divine mystery.

Application

As Christians, it is completely up to us on how we choose to live our lives. God respects our liberty and will not intervene unless He chooses to do so. God permitted Judas to sin and betray Jesus. However, this was part of God's grand plan of salvation. Sometimes sin is necessary to bring about events compliant to God's eternal plan for our lives.

How is the biblical concept of the decree different from the Non-Christian concept of Fate? For the application, explain why it is important to make this distinction.

Answer

Non-Christians conceive of the concept of fate as pure chance. In the Non-Christians view, God is also subject to fate. The Christians believe that God has a plan and purpose by which He brings all events to come to pass.

Application

As Christians, we can take comfort in the knowledge that God has a plan and purpose for our lives. Life events do not happen as chance. Life events are under the government of God who is all-powerful and all-knowing. By following the example of His Son Jesus, we can be assured of rewards for our holy actions and not rely on the vague concept of chance.

Summarize Shedd's advice regarding teaching the doctrines of election and reprobation. (Note that there is no separate application required for this topic.)

Summary:

The doctrines of election and reprobation are only understandable to mature Christians because they are higher truths. They explain the whole process of redemption and grace. The average Christian can only comprehend the doctrines of redemption and grace. The average Christian should only be taught these concepts. Election involves God's plan for humankind. The Holy Spirit works on the mind of man to regenerate his will according to His plan of salvation and repentance.

Why is the phrase “ ex nihilo” used to explain the biblical idea of creation?

Answer

The phrase “ ex nihilo” literally means “ something out of nothing.” It is used to describe the creation process. This was God's first act outside of His essence. The term is used to explain how God created the universe from no known existing physical matter.

Application

As human beings created in the image of God, we can be comforted with the knowledge that God created us to be holy like Him. Since we are part of His essence, yet separate from Him, we have been created with the ability to be holy as God is holy. “ Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect,” as Jesus instructed us.

How does the maxim “ nothing comes from nothing” relate to the doctrine of creation ex nihilo?

Answer

“ Nothing from nothing” means that a new substance was not created out of an existing substance. The creation of matter was originated by God, not from already existing elements.

Application

As Christians, we can be assured that God is the sole Creator of the universe and all things contained therein. We are to worship only Him. We are not to worship created beings or things. Mother Nature and the like are pagan concepts and despicable to God, the true Creator.

What is the single strongest (i. e., most persuasive) argument against the eternity of matter? Why?

Answer

The most persuasive argument against the eternity of matter is that it does not imply absolute perfection. Since God is absolute perfection and eternal,

anything that He creates is perfect and eternal, including matter. The argument would have to assume that God is not eternal and perfect, which is absurd.

Application

God is the author and finisher of our Christian faith. He is perfect and eternal and all things work together for the glory of God and His Son, Jesus. Like Jesus, we were created in the Father's image with the exception that Jesus was part of the Holy Trinity.

What is the single weakest (i. e., least persuasive) argument against the eternality of matter? Why?

Answer

Conversely, the weakest argument against the eternality of matter is that God is not eternal. If God is not eternal, any matter created by Him is not eternal. This is absurd.

Application

God is the author and finisher of our Christian faith. He is perfect, eternal, and all things work together for the glory of God and His Son, Jesus. Like Jesus, we were created in the Father's image with the exception that Jesus was part of the Holy Trinity.

Why does Shedd reject the notion that created things can be self-sustaining? Do you agree with Shedd's analysis? Why or why not?

Answer

Shedd rejects the notion that created things can be self-sustaining because government and preservation are functions of the eternal providence of God. Anything that is created relies on God's power. Shedd argues that annihilation can occur without a conscious act of God. I do not agree with this. It makes no sense because God is always conscious and all powerful. How could God do something without being consciously aware of it? This is absurd.

Application

We are nothing without God. God created us out of nothing and we can do nothing without Him. He created us to be holy and follow the example of His Son, Jesus. We cannot be self-sustaining. We exist at the mercy of God's holy will.

What distinguishes the biblical view of providence from the deistic view and the pantheistic view?

Answer

Under the biblical worldview, God creates matter and places it under certain universal, and natural laws. After that, God steps back and allows nature to play out on its own. God's creations are sustained by and for His pleasure. Under the pantheist worldview, God is at the center of the universe. God's

substance is in all things and all things are within His substance. There is no separation between the substance of God and the substance of His creations.

Application

The pantheist worldview is pagan and dangerous. People in the New Age movement believe this way. They believe that if they meditate enough, or deprive themselves of essential things like food or drink that they will enter a state of “at-one-ness” with God. In all actuality they are striving to become “little gods.” This is exactly the same mistake that Lucifer made before God cast him out of heaven. The biblical worldview is logical and makes sense. God created us, we live at the mercy of God’s will, and we will never be equal to God no matter how hard we may try. To do so would be a mortal sin.

What is “preservation” as a function of divine providence?

Answer

Preservation is a function of divine providence that is understood as God being a distinct being separate from His creations. Man is free to act according to his own will. God does not force His will upon man but provides all materials needed for man to function.

Application

God gives us everything we need so that we can be self-sufficient. As Christians, we are to treat the earth and all other created things as God has

directed. We are given everything we need to live a holy life in God's favor. By following the example of His Son, Jesus, we will learn to conform our will to the will of God.

How does Shedd use the relation of the human soul and the human body to illustrate divine providence?

Answer

The human soul and the human body are two distinct entities. The mind regulates the physical body and the soul regulates the mind-body. God is separate from the mind and the body but acts from within them.

Application

We are to love God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. If we allow the redeeming work of the Holy Spirit to regenerate our sinful minds, He will have a direct effect on our human actions and reactions. God, the Holy Spirit will act from within us so that we can develop “ the mind of Christ.”

What is “ government” as a function of divine providence?

Answer

God governs the universe through natural laws. God has complete control over His creations. The universe operates through natural laws that are under the supreme government of God.

Application

As Christians, we can be assured that anything that happens within the physical world happens because God wills it so. We are not in control of

natural events but we are in control of how we react to natural events. If something bad happens in the course of our lives, we can be assured that God is in control and that all things will work out the way God so intends.

Does God govern the physical world differently from the way He governs the mental world?

Answer

God uses the Holy Spirit specifically to act upon the mental world and the human mind. God uses natural laws to govern the physical world. In essence, both are governed the same way.

Application

As Christians, it is important for us to be receptive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. To ignore them will result in a spiritual disaster. If we are open to the redemptive work of the Holy Spirit, we can develop the “mind of Christ.” The Holy Spirit worked in Jesus while He was on this earthly plane. Jesus was a divine receptacle of the Holy Spirit. If we follow the example of Jesus, we too can be receptacles of the Holy Spirit.

What is a miracle? Why does God perform miracles?

Answer

Miracles are natural events or phenomena that appear extraordinary and inexplicable to the human mind.

God performs miracles to bring about events that can only be attributed to the extraordinary or the supernatural. These miracles also prove that God is all-powerful and in control of the laws of nature.

Application

As Christians, miracles are accepted as acts of God and they make perfect sense. We know that God is in control at all times over the physical laws of the universe. Miracles may be signs for the unbeliever rather than the believer. Supernatural events may be a mode by which the Holy Spirit can act upon the mind of an unbeliever to conform to God's will. However this is just conjecture.

What is the single best argument given to refute those who reject the idea of miracles?

Answer

Shedd argues that just because miracles contradict human experience, they do not violate the immutability of natural laws. In other words, natural laws are not predicated on uniformity. God controls natural laws in accordance to His good pleasure.

Application

Christians innately know that there is nothing that is not directly under the influence of God and His will. The examples of Jesus calming the seas and walking on the water are indicative of God's ability to bend natural laws for a divine purpose. God does this to prove a point, so to speak. All the earth and every creature on it is at the mercy of God's will.