

## Faith-Rest Drill: Universal Order: The Divine Decrees; R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s Definition of Divine Decrees

- 18) Von Rad speaks of the latter in his book and expounds further when he writes:

### **Von Rad, *Wisdom*, 192-94:**

In order to contribute a valid knowledge of experience, the span of an individual life is much too short; it requires the reflection and the sifting of generations. The legitimacy and worth of these teachings really resides primarily in the fact that they are validated by a long teaching tradition.

The following is clear. The credibility of the wise men's teachings consisted in the fact that they dealt with perceptions and experiences which had achieved definitive expression in the course of a long, careful development. Trust in life and in Jehovah could be supported by specific perceptions and experiences.

- 19) And von Rad documents these observations by referring to the wisdom literature known as the book of Job:

**Job 8:8 - Bildad:** "Please inquire of past generations and consider the things searched out by their fathers.

**v 9 -** "For we are only of yesterday and know nothing because our days on earth are as a shadow.

**v 10 -** "Will they not teach you and tell you and bring forth words from their minds?"

**Job 15:17 - Eliphaz:** "I will tell you, listen to me, and what I have seen I will also declare

**v 18 -** what wise men have told and have not concealed from the source of their fathers."

**Job 20:4 - Zophar:** "Do you not know this from of old, from the establishment of man on earth,

**v 5 -** that the triumph of the wicked is short and the joy of the godless momentary?"

- 8- The order that mankind has observed over the millennia and subsequently incorporated successfully into cultures, societies, and civilizations is the natural order designed by God in the divine decrees.

- 9- Over time man has been smart enough to figure out what doesn't work—because of resultant discipline or judgment—and what does work—because of resultant blessing and reward.
- 10- What makes it confusing for some is that there is an apparent conflict which seems to be at odds but is instead complementary: Jesus Christ controls history while at the same time the human race functions under its own free will.
- 11- But this is, in fact, the natural order of things for the post-Edenic history of the human race. Thus an important principle must be remembered: in human history, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man must coexist by divine decree.

Sovereignty: God's supreme authority and rule over all He creates.

Volition: The decision-maker of the soul. God has created a free will which can act independently of Himself.

- 12- The divine decree may be defined as follows:

**Thieme, R. B., Jr. *The Integrity of God*. Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1998; pp. 241-42:**

The decree of God is His eternal, holy, wise, and sovereign *purpose, comprehending* simultaneously all things that ever were or will be—in their causes, courses, conditions, successions, and relations and *determining* their certain futurity.

Each phrase of this concise, technical definition carries a wealth of information. Various attributes of God's essence are related to His "purpose" for angelic and human history. The source of the divine decrees is identified as being the omniscience of God "comprehending" all things in eternity past. Divine volition is depicted as "determining" or choosing, before anything existed, which things would actually become historical events. At the time of the decrees, all angelic and human history was yet future.

The decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of events which will happen in time and regarding the precise order and manner of their occurrence.

Throughout the doctrine is used the term “will of God” in a technical sense. Here the term means the decision He made in eternity past, from His attribute of sovereignty, which established that certain things would actually come into being while other things would not.