

## Predestination and Divine Decrees

### **Ephesians 1:4 ...In love**

### **Ephesians 1:5 He predestined us...**

To correctly, biblically, understand the doctrine of Predestination we must understand God.

In fact, the most important question you can ask someone you are thinking of marrying is what is their view of God? What do they think about Jesus Christ? What is their view of the Holy Bible? This is more important than their view of sex and children or money or politics. What do you think about God? This is equally true of all males as well as females. In fact, this is the most important question you can ask your pastor. And...ask yourself?

We must understand the Love of God, that God loves Jesus Christ. Then we must understand the Sovereignty of God along with all His Attributes. Then we must correctly understand Divine Decrees.

A look at almost everyone's doctrine of Divine Decrees you will discover hard-fast Calvinism. That is, that God 'predestines' some to heaven and some to the eternal Lake of Fire. They emphasize a wrong, non-biblical understanding of the Sovereignty of God. Their view of God is that He created a being to spend eternity separated from Him and suffering in a lake of fire.

Some others propose a Divine Decree that everyone will be saved. They emphasize a wrong, non-biblical understanding of the Love of God.

## Predestination and Divine Decrees Ephesians 1:5

So, what is the Biblical teaching on Divine Decrees? The following is a combination of work taken from: Evangelical Dictionary of Theology—second edition; Don Stewart; R.B. Thieme; Dr. Bill Mounce; notes from DTS; and the leading of the Holy Spirit to whom I am most grateful and completely dependent.

Let's start with the definition from the Evangelical Dictionary of Theology—second edition. "God's 'decree' is a theological term for the comprehensive plan for the world and its history that God sovereignly established in eternity past. Paul refers to "the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will." Ephesians 1:11.

*The decree of God is His eternal (always existed), holy (perfect integrity), wise (the application of omniscience to creation), and sovereign purpose, comprehending simultaneously all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions (status), successions (interaction with others that leads to certain decisions), and relations, and determining their certain futurity. (Thieme)*

### ***Divine Decree***

1. The decree of God is **His eternal**. This means they have always existed, God did not think them up at some point in eternity past; **holy**—this means they come from and are in conformity with His holiness, that is in conformity with His perfect Righteousness and Justice; **all wise** – this means it comes from His perfect Omniscience; and **sovereign** purpose- this means that He has the authority as creator to determine His perfect plan.

**Predestination and Divine Decrees**  
**Ephesians 1:5**

2. Since it includes a multitude of decisions and acts, it is often referred to as ‘Divine Decrees’ in the plural while in reality there is but a single decree—His Glorification! This decree covers every act by God from creation to redemption, it includes all the decisions by man, including their sinful decisions.

In fact, His Divine Decree is based upon the sinful actions of mankind which His Omniscience knew. He will orchestrate His Divine Plan in using His Omniscience to fulfill His own decree. God is not responsible for the sinful decisions of man, but in His Omniscience He knew every sinful decision that would be made and orchestrated His decree knowing the sinful decisions of mankind. This is true Sovereignty.

If there is any one point in history to demonstrate the Sovereignty of God and the free will of man other than the Cross upon which His Son died, it is the generation at the time of Noah and the flooding of the earth. It is really unbelievable that people who think like Calvin, can actually conceive of a God, creating perhaps a billion people to sin in the debauchery manner that the people did at the time of Noah, just so He can demonstrate His Wrath. People, He does not have to ‘predestine’ people to sin so He can demonstrate His wrath. All He has to do is to give creatures free will.

3. A couple of negatives on the Divine Decree.
  - a. God did not ‘foreordain’ all things that come to pass. That is, God did not foreordain Adam and Eve to sin. He knew, in His Omniscience that if He gave them free will and then gave them

**Predestination and Divine Decrees**  
**Ephesians 1:5**

commandments – *thou shall not eat* that they would sin, they would decide against Him.

- b. God did not ‘predestine’ all the sinful decisions that mankind would make throughout history.
- c. God did not ‘determine’ that man would disobey Him.

While giving mankind free will and then giving them commandments resulting in the sin of man, this does not make God responsible for our sinful decisions. Example: creating them male and female and creating sex for pleasure and procreation, does not mean He created or even was the cause of sexual sins.

4. The Extent of the Divine Decree. Divine Decree extends to every point of His creation.

- a. This starts with all the earth and all angelic beings. God created a vast number of angels and He created them unequal. Some had more wings than others, some had greater intelligence than others, but they each one had free will.
- b. God created one of them superior in every way to all the others. That is Lucifer. (Ezekiel 28).
- c. God gave all these angelic creatures free will. And Lucifer used his free will to rebel against God. One third of the angels used their free will to join Lucifer against God, while two thirds used their free will to reject Lucifer and choose to stay with God. (Revelation 12:4).

**Predestination and Divine Decrees**  
**Ephesians 1:5**

- d. After this part of the Angelic Conflict was over, each angel who sided with God was elect in that state and those who refused to trust God were destined to remain in that state for all eternity. Only in the sense of how they would worship God or rebel against God did angels continue to have free will.
  - e. Divine Decree extended to the creation of humanity. God decreed that man and woman would have free will. But throughout history whenever one member of the human race used that free will to choose to believe in His Messiah (Jesus the Christ) that would be the eternal state of that human being. When one died refusing to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior that was that person's eternal state. Then, in the Church Age, God intensified the Angelic Conflict by giving to man the Indwelling of the Third member of the Godhead. And when a believer made the faith decision to be empowered by that Spirit, the Holy Spirit took over inside that believer, until that believer chose to no longer walk in the Spirit but rebel against God and become 'carnal.' What is going to be interesting is that at the beginning of the Millennium, every believing Jew will be have their free will locked into the leading of the Holy Spirit.
5. The certainty of the Divine Decree. There are several passages of Scripture that reveal the certainty of Divine Decree.

**Isaiah 14:26 This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations.**

Predestination and Divine Decrees  
Ephesians 1:5

**Isaiah 14:27 For the Lord of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate *it*? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?”**

The Hebrew *esah* translated ‘plan’ is used for Divine Decrees or Divine proclamation of His decree for history. It refers to the decision or plan of God.

**devised** is the Qal passive of the verb meaning just that—to *devise*. Passive voice tells us this plan receives being devised by God. **Plan devised** refers to the Divine Plan or the Divine Decree.

**The Lord of host has planned.** This is the Qal perfect of the same verb just translated *devised*. What is important here is the declared fact that no one has the power or authority to counter the plan of God, His Divine Decrees.

This fact is reinforced by verse 24

**Isaiah 14:24 The Lord of hosts has sworn saying, “Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand,**

**Just as I have intended** is yet another word introducing Divine Decrees. And the word *planned* is the same word we saw in verses 26 and 27.

Predestination and Divine Decrees  
Ephesians 1:5

**Isaiah 46:9 “Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; (He is the Sovereign God) *I am* God, and there is no one like Me, (all others are idols)**

**Isaiah 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, (according to His Divine Decrees) And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, (purpose is the same word we saw in Isaiah 14:26)**

**Isaiah 14:26 And I will accomplish all My good pleasure**

**Isaiah 46:11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned *it, surely* I will do it.**

Remember that God can correctly give prophecy, because He is Omniscient, not because He ‘predestined’ men like Cyrus.

And a powerful declaration, not from a prophet or writer of Scripture but from a man who has encountered the plan of God. Nebuchadnezzar:

Predestination and Divine Decrees  
Ephesians 1:5

**Daniel 4:35 “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’**

6. Some Characteristics of the Decree.

a. The Decree of God comes from His profound wisdom.

**Ephesians 3:9 and to bring to light (in the Church Age) what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;**

**Ephesians 3:10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*.**

**Ephesians 3:11 *This* was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord**

The Greek adjective translated *manifold* is used only here in the New Testament. It conveys three basic descriptions of the wisdom of God.

**First**, it describes Divine wisdom as being in many parts —‘*many*



**Predestination and Divine Decrees**  
**Ephesians 1:5**

*colors as in a collection of flowers*’ The Complete Word Dictionary of New Testament.

**Secondly**, it describes Divine wisdom as that which is able to manifest itself in a variety of forms determined by what is needed at that moment—many and varied. The Complete Biblical Library.

**Thirdly**, it is used to refer to progressive revelation. This is clearly seen in

**Hebrews 1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,**

- b. His Decree is eternal. Also Ephesians 3:9-11. The point here is that God is not gaining in knowledge. What God has known at any time He has always known. Add to His eternity is His Omniscience which means God knew simultaneously everything that ever was or will be including their causes, conditions, successions and relations.
- c. His Decree is effectual in that it will produce every desire or intended action of God. Isaiah 46:10.
- d. He is immutable therefore His Decree is unchangeable and certain.
- e. God uses the sinful acts of man to bring about His decree.

**Gen. 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to**

Predestination and Divine Decrees  
Ephesians 1:5

**bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.**

**Acts 2:23 this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you (Religious Jews) nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men (Roman Gentiles) and put *Him* to death.**

The Greek word translated *predetermined* is another word for the Doctrine of Divine Decrees. Now, pay close attention. This Greek word occurs 8 times in the New Testament. In 7 of the 8 “they are all emphatically theological and Christological; they describe the person and work of Jesus Christ.” The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament edited by Kittel volume 5.

As we move toward Predestination, please know with certainty that Jesus Christ is the Love of God, and Jesus Christ was predetermined by God to be crucified for all the sins of the world. He did not predestine the sins but He did predestine the cure for sins. The only cure.

But God also predetermined the Resurrection of this Jesus. Then God appointed Jesus to not only be the only savior for all mankind but also to be the Judge of the living and the dead.

**Acts 10:40 God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible,**

**Acts 10:41 not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by**

Predestination and Divine Decrees  
Ephesians 1:5

**God, *that is*, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.**

**Acts 10:42 And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.**

**Acts 10:43 Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”**

Jesus Christ will be the judge at the Judgment Seat of Christ of every believer. And He will be the judge at the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the Millennium.

f. Divine Decree determines duration of man’s life.

**Job 14:5 “Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with You; And his limits You have set so that he cannot pass.**

**Psalms 39:4 “Lord, make me to know my end And what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am.**

In your sorrows over the death of a loved one, know that God is in control and He is perfect, His timing is perfect.

**Predestination and Divine Decrees**  
**Ephesians 1:5**

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

**Matthew 6:27 And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life?**

**Luke 12:7 indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more **valuable** than many sparrows.**

- g. God is perfect. Therefore, the decrees are perfect. Never challenge what God has decreed. The decrees are not perfect in content because they include sin, failure etc.
- h. And very important: The decrees of God are the free choice of God in eternity past. This is combined with His Sovereignty. As Creator He has the right and authority to determine His decrees. He decided from His own Free will to give free will to angels and mankind, so that both categories are free to choose for or against God. The Presbyterian shorter catechism says: “The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass.” Jesus Christ was well aware of this purpose of His own life.

**John 17:1 Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father,**

**Predestination and Divine Decrees**  
**Ephesians 1:5**

**the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,**

Here Jesus prays for His own death on the cross. How wonderful it is to dedicate your own life and death to the glory of God the Father. Also:

**John 17:4 I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. (Spiritual and physical death on the cross)**

**John 17:5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. (Resurrection, Ascension and Session of Jesus Christ.)**

7. By Decree is meant the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe: angelic history, human history, encompassing past, present and future events.
8. In other words, the decrees are the all-inclusive will and purpose of God concerning all that ever was or will be, originating in Himself which He Himself must have objectively designed for His own glory!
9. Declarations of the Divine Decrees. Here we look at specific things declared in His decrees.

**Predestination and Divine Decrees**  
**Ephesians 1:5**

- a. Very important in the world today, we start off with ‘The Stability of the Universe.’

**Psalm 119:89 Forever, O Lord Your word is settled in heaven.**

The Hebrew word translated *settled* refers to God’s decree, the way things stand and are going to occur—you word, your decree stands, is settled, not altered.

**Psalm 119:90a Your faithfulness continues throughout all generations;...**

The certainty of His decrees is His Faithfulness. God has decreed that whoever believes in His Son will have Eternal life and His faithfulness is our confidence, our hope, our assurance of Eternal life. The fulfillment of the Unconditional Covenants to Israel is certain when you combine His decree of these Covenants with His faithfulness.

**Psalm 119:90b ...You established the earth, and it stands.**

This Hebrew word means to remain, it will stand according to His decree. People, please do not fall for the lies of coming disaster to this earth due to climate change. Oh, there will be great climate disasters in the seven years of the Tribulation but not caused by man and free enterprise but by God Himself. The Globalists want the world to blame production of free enterprise for what they claim is climate change, so they can shut down

**Predestination and Divine Decrees**  
**Ephesians 1:5**

freedom of production or shut down America. It is just another attack against God, along with all the immoral attacks such as same sex marriage. These are all part of globalist anti-God maneuvers.

**Psalm 119:91a They stand this day according to Your ordinances,...**

This is yet another word used for Divine Decrees. It means a judgment or legal decision. It is used to show that the divine decrees are based on His perfect Righteousness and Justice and are therefore completely fair.

**Psalm 119:91b ...For all things are Your servants.**

*All things* include angels, man, and the earth and all the billions of galaxies. All things are subject to His Divine Decrees.

For another word used for ‘decrees’ look at

**Psalm 148:6 He (God) has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away.**

The Hebrew word *hoch or hog* refers to a mandate prescribed by decree or simply to decree.

We are to ‘fear’ or be in complete awe of God due simply to His decrees.

Predestination and Divine Decrees  
Ephesians 1:5

**Jeremiah 5:22 ‘Do you not fear Me?’ declares the Lord. ‘Do you not tremble in My presence? For I have placed the sand as a boundary for the sea, An eternal decree, so it cannot cross over it. Though the waves toss, yet they cannot prevail; Though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it.**

Be sure you grasp the Hebrew word *yare*; it means just that, to fear...it can also refer to have ultimate respect, even a reverence for God. We should fear when we are out of line with His Word, and have maximum respect when in His plan. America, today, has no fear of God as they boldly transgress His Word in reference to the Gospel and to moral living.

**Jeremiah 31:35 Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for light by day And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The Lord of hosts is His name:**

People worry about the wrinkles on your face before you worry about the earth and climate!



**Predestination and Divine Decrees**  
**Ephesians 1:5**

An interesting verse on the decrees of God is found in

**Amos 2:4 Thus says the Lord, “For three transgressions of Judah and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they rejected the law (*Torah*) of the Lord And have not kept His statutes;** (this should be translated decrees, and note that obedience to the Decrees are on the same level as obedience to the Torah – law)

**Their lies also have led them astray, Those after which their fathers walked.**

When you stay in line with the Decrees of God, you will not be led astray but will walk the straight and narrow.