

Divine Decrees and Predestination continued

Ephesians 1:5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

Definition of Divine Decrees: “God’s ‘decree’ is a theological term for the comprehensive plan for the world and its history that God sovereignly established in eternity. Paul refers to “the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.” Ephesians 1:11. Evangelical Dictionary of Theology—second edition.

The first nine points below are summarized from last week. We will continue with point 10.

Divine Decree

1. Here we noted that Divine Decrees are eternal, and from His Holiness, all-wise and His Sovereignty.
2. In reality, there is but a single decree: His Glorification.
3. We noted three negatives on the Divine Decrees.
 - 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 commandments – *thou shall not eat* – that they would sin, they would decide against Him.

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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.

4. The Extent of the Divine Decree.

5. The Certainty of the Divine Decree.

6. Some Characteristics of the Decree.

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. Declaration of specific things declared in His Decrees.

a. The stability of the universe.

b. We are to ‘fear’ or be in complete awe of God due simply to His Decrees. Jeremiah 5:22.

10. God did not decree Himself to be. God eternally existed outside of decrees. Therefore, Divine Decrees do not act upon God, but God acts upon the decrees. All things depend on God’s will and nothing is certain apart from God’s will. There comes a point in your theology where God’s will and the decrees must be understood as synonymous.

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11. God has decreed the eternal salvation of everyone who believes in His Son as Savior. Note carefully, God has not decreed who would believe in His Son and who would not believe, but everyone who believes in Jesus as their Savior, God has decreed they shall be eternally saved.

John 3:16 (Corrected Translation) For in this manner, loved, God, the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, (to die spiritually on the cross, bearing the judgment of all the sins of all mankind) that whoever believes in Him (as their Savior) shall not perish, but have eternal life.

This decree is made clear in

Ephesians 2:1 And you (this is addressed to those who have believed in Jesus Christ as Savior) were dead (spiritually) in your trespasses and sins,

Ephesians 2:2 in which you formerly walked (as unregenerate, unbelievers) according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, (Satan) of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

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Ephesians 2:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Ephesians 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved US,

We studied the Love of God, how Love sees a need and then meets that need. He saw the entire human race dead in sin, with no hope of recovery. And out of His love He did the only thing that could be done for our recovery. He sent His Son to die on the cross bearing the judgment for all our transgression and sins.

Ephesians 2:5 even when we were dead (spiritually) in our transgressions, (1) made us alive together (spiritually) with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Ephesians 2:6 and (2) raised us up with Him, and (3) seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

Ephesians 2:7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (this is what heaven will be like)

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Ephesians 2:8 For by grace (not earned nor deserved) you have been saved through faith; (non-meritorious faith in Jesus) and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;

Ephesians 2:9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Application of Divine Decrees: Under point 9, in Jeremiah 5:22 and Amos 2:4 we saw that we should ‘fear’ God in respect to His Divine Decrees, especially if we reject His Divine Decrees. Those who preach a distorted Gospel, one contrary to being saved by faith alone in Christ alone, should be in fear of God, of rejecting His Decree on Salvation and presenting a distorted gospel. Any time you reject ‘grace’ you are rejecting the love of God and His Decrees.

12. God has decreed all things in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,

and

Ephesians 1:10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in

Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.

This will be so important when we come to predestination. So many try to pin predestination on the unbelievers—some predestined to believe and many predestined not to believe. People, predestination begins with Jesus Christ. That is, you are not predestined until you have believed. It is so important to biblically understand Divine Decrees.

13. The Divine Decree Establishing the Kingdom of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

You can see from this verse God has decreed the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. People, He is coming again!

Revelation 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

We should believe the Decree of God concerning the coming of Jesus Christ that we live expecting Him to come today!!! *Come quickly Lord Jesus.*

14. A very important passage that includes Divine Decrees is

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those

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who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

How does this verse reveal Divine Decrees? This one verse is packed with declarations about God and reasons to fear Him and reasons to submit to His Will. First, note who is being spoken of: God! Now what does it say about God? We know something about God—we know that God causes all things to work together for good. This is a decree of God. Note the all-inclusive **all things**. Does this include ‘sins’ in the believer’s life? How does God *work* the results of sin to ‘good.’ The soul aches, pains, social hurts, financial loses, loss of friends, even loved ones, personal tragedies, stress, anxiety, depression, all those events and situations that cause the soul of a believer to groan and long for release even the release of death? How indeed? By Divine Decree that is how! It is here that we see how our God’s decree takes into consideration the decisions of our free will. There are two things God considers when He decrees concerning our lives. First, **to those who are called according to *His* purpose**. That is referring only to those humans who have made a decision to believe in Jesus as their Savior. This places us in the Divine Decree of justification, election and predestination, but what about our daily lives? How do the Divine Decrees affect our daily lives? **To those who love God**. This is the present tense of the verb *agapao*. And here is what the Omniscience of God is aware of, that we continually love Him! This means continually abiding in the power of the Holy Spirit for it is the Holy Spirit who gives us this love for God. Love from our flesh nature does not impress God. But when a believer lives by faith in the Holy

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Spirit and He pours in this love for God, God decrees for all things to work together for good. Now, the question, what is this ‘good?’ This good is the glorification of God which is the sum total of Divine Decrees. Man’s destiny is the outworking of his own decisions which God by His Omniscience knew. He designed His Decrees accordingly. The decree of God removes no man from within the sphere of his own experience, from the outworking of his own choices, acting from his own judgments, based on his own desires, thoughts and circumstances. God’s knowledge in eternity past in no way effects our thoughts and decisions. God knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable both actual and possible. There never was a time when the decrees did not exist. This means that God also knows the alternatives to history; all those ‘if’ questions we think of. God knows exactly what would have happened had we made another decision.

Be able to distinguish between the Omniscience of God and the Foreknowledge of God. Foreknowledge makes nothing happen or certain but merely acknowledges what is certain, what He has decreed.

15. Distinction should be made between God’s laws and God’s decrees. Laws are given that we might know what pleases and what offends God, how God desires us to live and what sin is. Laws can be broken and are often broken. Decrees are God’s plan for the human race. Decrees cannot be broken. The agent by his free will is a free agent. That is you have self-determination when you are given life, therefore you are accountable for your own decisions, good or bad.

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Distinction should also be made between the decrees of God and the desires of God. The decrees include a lot of things which are not God's desires, because the decrees include all things you think or do. Many things in the decrees are not the desires of God. For example, God does not desire for any to sin. God does not desire for any to perish in the Lake of Fire. God does not desire that a believer sin. But all these things do happen in His decrees. Angels fell; mankind fell; many reject so great a salvation and believers sin all the time. These things do not please God but they are part of His Divine Decrees.

16. Divine Decrees and Lapsarianism. Lapsarianism is the logical order of God's decrees and that order is:
 - a. The decree to create.
 - b. The decree to create rational beings with free will (angelic and human).
 - c. The decree to permit the fall in both angelic and human realms.
 - d. Unlimited Atonement.
 - e. The simultaneous decrees of election and predestination which is applying salvation to those who believe in Jesus Christ. The Bible is clear that man is the beneficiary of grace, after, not before the fall.

1 Peter 1:2 who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus

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Christ (faith in Jesus Christ) and be sprinkled with His blood: (be covered by the cross work of Jesus Christ.) May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

17. Another very important aspect with Divine Decrees and the sins of man and sins of angels. God reveals His will in three areas. First, there is the Directive Will of God. This is seen in His laws, His statutes, His commands, His declared plans as in the plan of Salvation. This is also seen in the life of a believer when that believer is led by the Holy Spirit. Then, God's will with respect to sin is a permissive decree. This is true regardless of the source of the sin: angelic, or unbelieving humans or believers. Then there is the over-riding decree or the over-ruling will or decree of God. Where so many people, Christians, scholars, teachers, preachers etc. get so confused or messed up is in the permissive will of God. God permitted, by decree, Satan to commit the original sin. God permitted, by decree, Adam and Eve to commit the original sin of mankind. God permits by decree every believer to sin. God permits the vast number of sins being committed right here in America. He does not cause people to sin but by Decree He permits people to sin. However, there are more times than we know, the over-ruling will to function in the daily life of this world. It is in these areas of Divine Decrees that we study His Word to know what is His Directive will so that we in the power and leading of the Holy Spirit will make decisions to be in His Will. This is why it is so important

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for the believer to grow in the knowledge of the Word of God and be in the leading and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

18. Objections to the doctrine of Divine Decrees. Many people who study the Bible do not believe in the doctrine of Divine Decrees. This is in spite of the fact that there are Hebrew and Greek words translated *decree*. Their objections to the doctrine of Divine Decrees is primarily because of failure of correctly understanding Divine Decrees. For example, they object because in their understanding, it is inconsistent with the free will of man. But as we have seen from the Bible, God decreed man to have free will, and that man is responsible for how he uses his free will. And secondly, they conclude that Divine Decrees make God the author of sin. But again, we have pointed out from Scripture that God gives to His creatures (angelic and human) free will, and allows or permits them to make decisions to sin or not to sin.
19. Divine Decrees are God's eternal purpose regarding everything about you according to His wisdom, love and sovereign will, incorporating all of these for His own Glory (remember we are created for His Glory). In His decrees the sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist in human history, just as it existed in angelic history prior to the creation of mankind.
20. The Decrees of God have personal benefits to everyone of us as we live each day of our lives.
 - a. Because God cannot contradict His own nature or His own essence, the attributes of God necessitate His willing the highest

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and best for mankind. But mankind has free will. This is why many will be in the Lake of Fire and why many believers will be miserable and under SAD (Stress, Anxiety, Depression) throughout their lives on earth but will spend all eternity with God and with Jesus Christ.

- b. Because of the decrees that God has made known to us, we have hope or confidence in God, regardless of what happens in our lives. We know He has decreed good for us if we walk in His Spirit by faith.
- c. They give us stern warnings in our lives as to how we ought to live by faith in the Holy Spirit and grow in His Word.
- d. They provide peace in our souls no matter what is happening in the world.
- e. The Divine Decree for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ as Savior includes in the 34 things given to everyone who is saved, justification, election and predestination in Jesus Christ. By Decree when anyone believes in Jesus he/she is justified before God, and shares the election and the predestination of Jesus Christ.
- f. All imputations are part of the decree of God. There are five imputations in the plan of God.
 - 1) Human life is imputed to the invisible soul and by decree it remains in that soul forever. This means that small children, morons, all who die before reaching the age of accountability receive grace salvation. They were born under condemnation

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and since condemnation precedes salvation, they are saved by grace.

- 2) Adam's original sin is imputed to the Inherited Sin Nature at birth. Therefore, every member of the human race is in sin and under condemnation, which precedes salvation.
 - 3) At the point of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, eternal life is imputed to the human soul and human spirit created by God the Holy Spirit, called regeneration, one of the salvation ministries of the Holy Spirit. Here is our eternal security, we cannot lose the imputation of eternal life.
 - 4) Perfect Righteousness is imputed as a judicial imputation to the believer at the point of faith in Jesus Christ.
 - 5) On the cross, all the sins of the world were imputed to Jesus Christ resulting in His Spiritual death. After He had died spiritually and paid for the judgment of all the sins of the world, He died physically. The only sin for which Jesus Christ could not die is rejection of Himself as Savior.
21. We saw that all the decrees can be understood as one single decree, and that is the decree for His glory.
- a. The decrees are joined into one final and all-inclusive objective: the glory of God.

**Proverbs 16:4 The Lord has made everything
for His own purpose,**

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Romans 11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

Hebrews 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

Revelation 4:11 “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

- b. Being eternal and infinite, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are worthy of all glory.
- c. Being alone before all creation, the decrees of God concern no one but the members of the Trinity and their eternal glory. We can glorify God, but our failure to recognize and glorify Him does not stop His glory. God is glorified in what He is and in what He has decreed!!
- d. The whole purpose of Jesus as God, becoming a member of the human race is to glorify God.

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

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

John 17:4 I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.

John 17:5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

22. Conclusion: In conclusion, let's cover the most controversial aspect of Divine Decrees, that is Decrees and human free will. In divine decrees the Sovereignty of God and the free will of man co-exist. Divine decrees and the sovereignty of God and the plan of God are totally consistent with human free will volition. Free will is not free unless man can decide against God or for God. You have the freedom throughout everyday of your life to choose for God or against God. Be careful of the choices you make. God is not the author of sin or of evil. Free will is the origin and source of sin and evil. The greatest creature created by God, made a decision in his soul to stop loving God. The moment he made that decision he started looking at himself and thought how wonderful he was and how he could be like God. People, you will never be like God, therefore be ever so content to have the privilege to glorify Him!