



## Divine Decrees

The Divine Decrees are God's eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of events which happen in time and the precise manner and order of their occurrence. The Divine Decrees were known by God in eternity past through His perfect omniscience and are the basis for God's plan for the human race. God's omniscience rendered the Divine Decrees certain for all past, present and future events in human and angelic history. The Divine Decrees are God's perfect divine plan that existed in eternity past as declared in the Scripture. The plan centers around the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 John 3:23; Eph. 1:4-5.

*"This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us." (1 John 3:23, NASB)*

*"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will," (Ephesians 1:4-5, NASB)*

Jesus Christ is the focal point of the Father's plan. Jesus Christ is the revealer of the Father's character and His grace. Entrance into God's plan is based on the principle of grace whereby the sovereignty of the deity of Jesus Christ and the volition of His humanity meet at the Cross. It was decreed by God in eternity past that Jesus Christ would go to the Cross and pay the penalty for man's sins. However, it was the human volition of Jesus Christ who decided for the Cross at Gethsemane the night before. Luke 22:42; Matt. 26:39; Matt. 26:42.

*"saying, 'Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.'" (Luke 22:42, NASB)*

*"And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.'" (Matthew 26:39, NASB)*

*"He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.'" (Matthew 26:42, NASB)*

He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He rose from the dead. To receive Him, you must express positive volition by faith in Jesus Christ. This is the doctrine of the union of grace and faith. Under the grace principle the work is accomplished by God while man accepts that work and thereby enjoys the benefits - apart from his own merit and ability. God has provided salvation at the Cross, but your free will must appropriate it. John 3:36.

*"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36, NASB)*

God's plan was so designed in eternity past so as to include all events and actions. This is His omniscience. He knows about all events and actions related to their causes and conditions. That adds up to Romans 8:28.

*"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28, NASB)*

Billions of years ago, God had a plan for you and had you personally in mind. He knew billions and billions of years ago that you would be reading this and under what conditions. He knew that you would



come of your own volition because you are positive to Bible doctrine. God's plan was so designed in eternity past so as to include all events and actions related to their causes and conditions, as a part of an indivisible system every link being a part of the integrity of the whole.

He is perfect, and His plan is perfect. The "decree" in Psalm 2:7 is  $\text{חָטָה}$  (chôq) in the Hebrew and means plan, appointment, enactment. The word has a perpetual meaning.

*"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'" (Psalms 2:7, NASB)*

God's plan was so designed in eternity past that not one event, action, or thought of negative volition can disrupt that plan or alter its completion. And yet, volition is preserved and never coerced. Psalms 148:6.

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

The eternal purpose of the Decrees is given in Ephesians 1:11 and Ephesians 3:11.

*"also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will," (Ephesians 1:11, NASB)*

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

The "predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God" in Acts 2:23 indicates a conference in eternity past.

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

The three members of the Godhead were present at a conference in eternity past and the Father's plan was discussed among them as revealed in John 5:20, John 8:26, John 10:18, Psalms 2:7, and Psalms 110:1.

*"For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel." (John 5:20, NASB)*

*"I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world." (John 8:26, NASB)*

*"No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." (John 10:18, NASB)*

*"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'" (Psalms 2:7, NASB)*

*"A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'" (Psalms 110:1, NASB)*

In Psalms 40:8 and Hebrews 10:7-8, Jesus speaks of doing the will of the Father, indicating that God the Father is the author or planner of the universe and all that is in it and that the Lord Jesus Christ was there when it was planned.

*"I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart." (Psalms 40:8, NASB)*



*“‘THEN I SAID, ‘BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.’” After saying above, “SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them” (which are offered according to the Law),” (Hebrews 10:7-8, NASB)*

## **The Divine Plan**

God’s plan is perfect even as its author is perfect. Psalms 18:30.

*“As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the LORD is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.” (Psalms 18:30, NASB)*

God’s plan is summed up by one word - grace. No one enters the Father’s plan apart from grace. Grace is where the sovereignty of God and the free will of man meet at the Cross. This is the doctrine of the union of grace and faith. Under the grace principle the work is accomplished by God while man enjoys and gains the benefits apart from his own merit, apart from his own ability. Eph. 2:4-9.

*“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:4-9, NASB)*

God’s plan is centered in one person, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Trinity decided billions of years ago that our Lord Jesus Christ would go to the Cross. To do that, God the Son had to take on the form of man to become the unique God-man. This is because deity cannot have anything to do with sin and so cannot receive the imputation of the sins of mankind. Therefore, deity cannot receive the judgment of sin from the justice of God the Father. Deity cannot die physically. Deity could not be buried and could not rise from the dead. Jesus Christ had to also be perfect sinless humanity and co-equal and co-eternal God – the unique God-man in one person forever. Eph. 1:4-7; 1 Peter 1:20-21; Heb. 1:1-5; Rev. 13:8.

*“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:4-7, NASB)*

*“For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” (1 Peter 1:20-21, NASB)*

*“All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.” (Revelation 13:8, NASB)*

In the plan, God conceived of the existence of man and God revealing Himself to man. Knowing man would sin and turn against Him, He planned for the redemption and reconciliation of sinners through the death of a sinless substitute – Jesus Christ. The second person of the Trinity agreed to take on the form of man and become the unique God-man Jesus Christ whose sinless humanity would voluntarily receive the judgment for the sins of all mankind. Heb. 10:9-10.

*“then He said, “BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL.” He takes away the first in order to*



*establish the second. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Hebrews 10:9-10, NASB)*

God’s perfect plan of grace is progressively revealed throughout Scripture until the “fullness of time” came according to Galatians 4:4 when the Son of God was manifested to fulfill the Father’s plan. 1 John 3:5.

*“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,” (Galatians 4:4, NASB)*

*“You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.” (1 John 3:5, NASB)*

God’s grace plan is for all mankind and is free to all who accept it. The divine decrees are the statement that reveals God’s plan for the human race. Heb. 2:9; Rom. 3:24.

*“But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.” (Hebrews 2:9, NASB)*

*“being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;” (Romans 3:24, NASB)*

### **Free Will of Man and The Sovereignty of God**

Part of the Divine Decrees is the decision in eternity past by God that His creatures (angelic and human) would be given free will and that God’s sovereignty would co-exist with their free will. The thoughts, decisions and actions of God’s creatures are not the Decrees. The omniscience of God anticipated in eternity past His creatures’ thoughts, actions, and decisions. That is the content of the Divine Decrees. God knew in eternity past all that can be known. God’s perfect plan also always existed in eternity past. God’s plan is merely the unfolding or execution of His Decrees.

Without interfering with human free will in any way, God has designed a plan so perfect that it includes cause and effect, directive, provision, preservation and function for all believers. Under God’s plan, He has decreed that He will do some things directly, He will do some things through agencies like Israel and the Church, and He will do some things through individuals.

There are primary, secondary, and tertiary functions within the plan of God. All of these functions constitute one great, all comprehensive plan, eternal, unchangeable, and without loss of integrity regardless of how bad history becomes or how corrupted man acts.

The plan of God is consistent with human freedom. God does not limit or coerce human freedom. However, a distinction should be made between what God causes like the Cross and what God permits like sin. James 1.

*“Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.” (James 1:13-15, NASB)*

God created man with a free will and He permits that free will to function apart from His sovereignty. That is how Adam sinned. Man has a free will, so he can reject God and does. God never caused sin and never sponsored sin because it is incompatible with His perfect essence. Man is the source of sin in the



human race. John 3:16.

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16, NASB)*

Genesis 2:17 and Genesis 3:6 demonstrate that mankind has free will. God never condones or causes sin in the human race. This is incompatible with His essence and character. In the perfect environment of the Garden and in perfect innocence, God warned man against sin and its consequences.

*"but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." (Genesis 2:17, NASB)*

*"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate." (Genesis 3:6, NASB)*

A distinction must be made between the divine decrees and divine laws. The divine decrees are related to the plan of God in both design and action, but cannot be altered. The divine laws regulate human conduct, but can be altered by negative volition.

### **God's Foreknowledge**

God's foreknowledge is a subset of His omniscience and is regarding believers only. God's omniscience knew in eternity past all the knowable. This included all actions, decisions, motivations, and thoughts of all His creatures. His foreknowledge includes only the reality of what has or will happen regarding believers' actions, decisions, motivations, and thoughts. All of God's foreknowledge is in God's Divine Decrees. All that we have done or will do in our lives was known by God as reality before anything existed in eternity past.

God has always known from eternity past every believer's thoughts, motives, decisions, and actions. There never was a time in all of eternity past when God did not know everything about you. He always knew every thought you would ever have, every motive that would be formed from those thoughts, every decision you would make from your thoughts or lack of thoughtfulness, and every action you will ever complete.

The foreknowledge of God makes nothing certain, but merely acknowledges what is certain. This is the content of the Decrees. Foreknowledge is a means of relating us to the plan of God as an individual since eternity past. This gives us a sense of security. You are never lost or forgotten by God. You are always in God's mind. This application keeps you from self-pity. God foreknows all things about us as certainly future because He has decreed them from His omniscience. Isaiah 41:26; Isaiah 42:9; Isaiah 43:9; Isaiah 46:10; Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:2.

*"Who has declared this from the beginning, that we might know? Or from former times, that we may say, 'He is right!'"? Surely there was no one who declared, Surely there was no one who proclaimed, Surely there was no one who heard your words." (Isaiah 41:26, NASB)*

*"Behold, the former things have come to pass, Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you." (Isaiah 42:9, NASB)*

*"All the nations have gathered together So that the peoples may be assembled. Who among them can declare this And proclaim to us the former things? Let them present their witnesses that they may be justified, Or let them hear and say, 'It is true.'" (Isaiah 43:9, NASB)*





*"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 46:10, NASB)*

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

*"according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure." (1 Peter 1:2, NASB)*

### **The Five Elective Decrees**

The five elective decrees from the Divine Decrees are known theologically as Modified Infralapsarianism. The first elective decree was the decree of God to create mankind. God's purpose for this was to resolve the prehistoric Angelic Conflict. When members of the human race accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior by faith alone in Christ alone, the Angelic Conflict is resolved. Heb. 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." (Hebrews 2:10, NASB)*

The second elective decree was the decree of God to permit the fall of mankind as an extension of the Angelic Conflict. The third elective decree was the decree of God to provide eternal salvation for all mankind under unlimited atonement. This occurred when all personal sins from the human race (past, present, and future) were imputed to Jesus Christ as our substitute and judged by God the Father while He was still alive physically on the Cross. 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Tim. 4:10; Titus 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2.

*"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, NASB)*

*"who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time." (1 Timothy 2:6, NASB)*

*"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men," (Titus 2:11, NASB)*

*"But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." (Hebrews 2:9, NASB)*

*"and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." (1 John 2:2, NASB)*

The fourth elective decree was for God the Father, in eternity past, to place in reserve for every believer, all of the blessings that could possibly be conveyed to each Church Age believer if they were to follow God's plan for their lives in every way. Knowledge that these blessings exist for every believer provides motivation for each believer and the means of glorifying God. Eph. 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," (Ephesians 1:3, NASB)*

As each believer lives his or her life more and more according to God's plan, Jesus Christ distributes these blessings to them in life as they learn spiritual capacity to handle these blessings. Jesus Christ also distributes those blessings meant for the eternal life at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Conveying these



eternal blessings also glorifies God.

The fifth elective decree was the simultaneous decrees of election and predestination. Election is the expression of the will of God for you. Election provides equal privilege by making every Church Age believer a royal priest who is then able to represent themselves before God without any intermediary as was required in the Old Testament. The Levitical Priesthood served this function in the Old Testament. Equal opportunity for all Church Age believers is provided by God providing everything we need to live our lives on this earth with His grace resources for the spiritual life. Eph. 1:4-5.

*"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will," (Ephesians 1:4-5, NASB)*

Predestination is the provision of the will of God for you. Equal privilege is provided by placing every Church Age believer into union with Christ at the moment of salvation. Equal opportunity is provided to each believer by being allowed to use the unique spiritual life for the Church Age. This spiritual life was used by Jesus Christ during His life on earth. It is provided by God to all Church Age believers and is empowered by the Holy Spirit. This is the only means provided by God for spiritual advance and learning God's purpose and plan for our lives.

Election and predestination provide both motivation and the means of living our lives as unto the Lord and thereby living according to God's plan with resultant distribution of the blessings God stored away in eternity past for each one of us.

### **Administration of God's Plan**

The completed written Canon of Scripture provides the outline of the administration of God's plan. Scripture describes the execution of the plan for every believer and it describes the consummation of the plan at the end of human history.

The administration of God's plan in each dispensation is different. The execution of the plan is through Christ and the redeemed, with the balance from Satanic backlash. The consummation of the plan of God was in our Lord's resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God the Father.

The Decrees not only provide for positive volition endurance, but also provide promises, techniques, doctrines, and principles. The decrees provide for recovery from negative volition by confession of sin, removal of scar tissue, and reversion recovery.

The decrees are flexible in that God's plan provides more grace resources to every believer in the Church Age than in previous dispensations because this is the intensified stage of the Angelic Conflict. These unique grace resources include all believers in union with Jesus Christ, the universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts for every believer, the filling of the Spirit, a completed Canon of Scripture and so on.

### **Application**

The Divine Decrees are the perception of God's omniscience based on His eternal purpose. God's plan depends only on God. It does not depend on you. That is why Bible doctrine is so important so that as your thinking is renovated by spiritual growth, the more you adhere to His perfect plan. This glorifies God.

No matter how great the evil or how many people express negative volition, God's perfect plan continues to unfold exactly as He decreed in eternity past. For example, all the forces of Satan and his



fallen angels cannot destroy the Church. Matt. 16:18.

*"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it." (Matthew 16:18, NASB)*

All the forces of Satan and his fallen angels cannot destroy the Word of God. Matt. 24:35.

*"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away." (Matthew 24:35, NASB)*

All the forces of Satan and his fallen angels cannot stop you from exercising positive volition for the work of Jesus Christ and receiving eternal salvation. John 7:17.

*"If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself." (John 7:17, NASB)*

All the forces of Satan and his fallen angels cannot stop you from maturing spiritually as a believer. 2 Peter 1:8-10.

*"For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;" (2 Peter 1:8-10, NASB)*

## **Conclusions**

No decree in itself opposes human freedom. You always have free will to make your own choices in life. Your free will allows you to choose to serve God. But once a choice is made from your free will, then the function of the decrees does limit your human freedom at the same time giving your volition freedom to serve God in the spiritual life.

We were not born with the capability of serving God, but after salvation, we can freely choose to do so in the power of the Holy Spirit. This only comes after we are born again.

God has always been perfect absolute happiness. He wants you as a believer to function under that very same absolute happiness. But to do that, He has decreed that you must function under the grace apparatus for perception. You have a choice to be a part of His plan or to go with your own plan and be miserable.