

# The Decrees of God

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By decree is meant the determination, the purpose and the will of God. By God's decrees we mean that all things happen in one way or the other through the direct purpose and plan of God.

To deny these decrees is to deny God Himself, his sovereignty, his power, and his compassion toward his people, thus, salvation itself.

"Plan and purpose as we may, the plans and purposes will turn only to the final end which God has predetermined" (Matthew Henry).

A. H. Strong says, "We give thanks to God for blessings which come to us through the free actions of others, but if God has not purposed these blessings, we owe thanks to others and not to God"

The Bible used the word decree in the singular (Dan. 6:26). But we use it in the plural, because we have finite minds and must think of these as ongoing occurrences, seeing them from an earthly perspective.

These decrees are also eternal, not carnal. They come from God himself within himself, and they do not depend upon any outward source.

## I. SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- A. Ps 2:7 *I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou [art] my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*
- B. Eph 3:11 *According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:*
- C. Ac 2:23 *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*
- D. Eph 1:9 *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*
- E. Eph 1:5 *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

## II. TYPES OF DECREES

### A. Explanation

- 1. All things were not decreed in the same manner. God is not a static, one-motion God. He can do this and that and the other without contradicting himself and without answering to someone else.
- 2. God did not decree sin in the same way he decreed righteousness, for example

### B. Positive Decrees

- 1. God positively decreed the creation of the universe. When he said, "*Let there be light,*" this was a spoken decree, and it was positive; nothing could hinder the work of this decree
- 2. God positively decreed a flood. God said in Ge 6:17 *And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein [is] the breath of life, from under heaven; [and] every thing that [is] in the earth shall die.*
- 3. God positively decreed a nation in Ge 12:2 *And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:*

4. God positively decreed that Israel go into captivity - Jer 25:9 *Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.*
  5. In the book of Daniel chapters two and seven, we find that God has decreed the ages of this world, and in he says in Da 12:2 *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame [and] everlasting contempt.* This is a positive decree, and no one can change it.
  6. God positively decreed to send Jesus to the earth to live a perfect life and die for the sins of his people – Ac 2:23 *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*
  7. God positively decreed that Jesus would return one day to take us to be with him: Dan. 7:13 *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, [one] like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.*
  8. These are all positive decrees and must and will happen no matter what.
- C. Permissive Decrees
1. “God is the efficient cause of all that is good, while evil is only permitted and directed and overruled for His glory.” (C. D. Cole)
  2. Ps 76:10 *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*
  3. Phil. 2:13 *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.*
  4. God did not decree evil, but he permits evil. This is connected to man’s own will; and God allows man to make his own decisions concerning the acts in his life.
  5. But God decreed to stop me in the middle of my own decisions and make me willing in the day of his power. This is a positive decree, and he saved my soul by that decree.
  6. Had I been left to my own will, I would never have trust him. I would be forever in my sins, because that is what I wanted until his grace showed me a more splendid way, the way of grace and obedience.

### III. SECRET AND REVEALED DECREES

- A. If we think that we can explain or even understand God’s decrees in every detail, we are very deceived, for his decrees are his own and not ours.
- B. De 29:29 *The secret [things belong] unto the LORD our God: but those [things which are] revealed [belong] unto us and to our children for ever, that [we] may do all the words of this law.*
- C. God does not hold us responsible for the secret decrees, but he requires us to understand and obey his revealed will. They are revealed in scripture, and we are responsible for knowing what God commands us to do.
  1. Lev 22:31 *Therefore shall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I [am] the LORD.*
  2. Prov 3:1 *My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:*
  3. John 14:15 *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

### IV. THE VALUE OF THIS DOCTRINE

- A. This Doctrine Magnifies God
- B. This Doctrine Humbles Believers
- C. Understanding This Doctrine Indicates Christian Growth
  - 1. Without an understanding of this doctrine, we cannot completely understand one of the most blessed verses in the Bible.
  - 2. Ro 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.*

"Careless seems the great avenger;  
History's pages but record  
One death grapple in the darkness,  
Twixt old systems and the Word.  
Truth forever on the scaffold;  
Wrong forever on the throne;  
But that scaffold sways the Future;  
And, behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God, within the shadow,  
Keeping watch above His own."  
- -Lowell.