

Chapter 3 - Of God's Decree

The Reality and Extent of God's Decree

1. God hath decreed in Himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever come to pass;(1) yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein;(2) nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established;(3) in which appears His wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree.(4)

(1) Isa. 46:10; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:15,18

Isa. 46:9-10 “9Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:”

Rom.9:15,18 “15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.”

(2) James 1:13; 1 John 1:5

James 1:13 “13Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:”

(3) Acts 4:27,28; John 19:11

Acts 4:27,28 “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

(4) Num. 23:19; Eph. 1:3-5

Eph.1:3-5 “3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,”

The Decree is Not Conditional

2. Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions,(5) yet hath He not decreed anything, because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.(6)

(5) Acts 15:18

Acts 15:18 “18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.”

(6) Rom. 9:11,13,16,18

Rom. 9-18 “(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. 14What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.”

God’s Creatures and the Decree

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ,(7) to the praise of His glorious grace;(8) others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice.(9)

(7) 1 Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:34

Matt.25:34 “34Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:”

(8) Eph. 1:5,6

Eph.1:5,6 “5Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

(9) Rom. 9:22,23; Jude 4

Rom.9:22,23 “22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

A Definite Number

4. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.(10)

(10) 2 Tim. 2:19; John 13:18.

2 Tim. 2:19 “19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

John 13:18 “18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.”

Election in Christ

5. Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love,(11) without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto.(12)

(11) Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; Rom. 8:30; 2 Tim. 1:9; I Thess. 5:9

Eph. 1:4, 9, 11 “4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:”

(12) Rom. 9:13,16; Eph. 2:5,12

Eph. 2:5,12 “5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:”

The Golden Chain, or the Ordo Salutis (Latin: Order of Slavation)

6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so He hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto;(13) wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ,(14) are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified,(15) and kept by His power through faith unto salvation;(16) neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.(17)

(13) 1 Pet. 1:2; 2Thess. 2:13

1 Pet.1:2 “2Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

(14) 1 Thess. 5:9, 10

1 Thess.5:9-10 “9For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.”

(15) Rom. 8:30; 2 Thess. 2:13

Rom.8:30 “30Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

(16) 1 Pet. 1:5

1 Pet.1:5 “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”

(17) John 10:26, 17:9, 6:64

Jhn.10:26 “26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”

Jhn.17:9 “9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”

Jhn.6:64 “64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.”

How the Doctrine of the Decree is to be Handled

7. The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; **(18)** so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise,**(19)** reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility,**(20)** diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.**(21)**

(18) 1 Thess. 1:4,5; 2 Pet. 1:10

2 Pet. 1:10 *“10Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:”*

(19) Eph. 1:6; Rom. 11:33

Rom.11:33 *“33O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”*

(20) Rom. 11:5,6,20

Rom. 11:5,6,20 *“5Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:”*

(21) Luke 10:20

“20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”