

**The Divine Decree: Introduction: Divine Attributes; Definition of the Divine Decree; Frost's "The Road Not Taken"; the Computer of the Divine Decree: Imputations at Physical & Spiritual Birth**

*The Divine Decree*

**Introduction:**

**"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that have not been done, saying, 'My purpose [decree] will be established, and I will accomplish My good pleasure.'" (Isaiah 46:10)**

The Lord told His original disciples "there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known" (Matthew 10:26).

He noted that the going price for two sparrows was a penny "yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father" (v. 29). Would that a certain squirrel, busily gnawing my deck apart, will fall to the ground someday soon.

The Lord next informed the twelve that "the very hairs of your head are numbered," although for us men there is required a consistent update. (v. 30)

These examples point out the minute detail that is known by God. They indicate that every aspect of our lives is known by Him.

There is nothing that we can conceal or hide from Him. He has known all about us from eternity past. For example, His complete knowledge of Jeremiah and his eventual appointment as a prophet is expressed by the Lord in:

**Jeremiah 1:5 - "Before [ in eternity past ] I formed you in the womb I knew you [ omniscience ], and before you were born I consecrated you [ sovereignty set him apart for special service ]; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."**

Note that Jeremiah was appointed to be a prophet in eternity past. He did not "try out for prophet." The omniscience of God discerned every thought, decision, and action involved in Jeremiah's life and sovereignty determined that these attributes would qualify him to be a prophet to the nations.

Each person who will have ever lived during the course of human history was as precisely understood in eternity past as was Jeremiah.

The impact this concept has on understanding the events of one's life is unmeasured. God's complete understanding of each person's life, plus all the events associated with it, enables us to better evaluate circumstances and why they occur.

The principle that must be understood in examining the relationship between the decree of God and the life of an individual can be stated thusly: In human history, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist by divine decree.

By Thursday night we hope to have a better understanding of this principle.

Another doctrine that must be understood is that of the Essence Box, or the attributes of God, especially those that are emphasized in the divine decree.

**The Sovereignty of God:** His eternal, infinite, unchangeable will expressed in the divine decree in eternity past. It includes the idea of divine free will which is perfect. Of all the untold trillions of decisions made by God, each was perfect; it is impossible for God to make a wrong decision.

The more we comply with divine decisions the more blessings we will enjoy in life. Failure to comply with divine decisions results in self-induced misery and divine discipline.

**Visual #1:**  
**Attributes of**  
**God**

**The Righteousness of God:** The perfection of God is expressed by His perfect standards which He will never compromise. Righteousness is the principle of divine integrity. Righteousness demands righteousness; it approves of compliance with His standards and disapproves of disobedience toward them. What righteousness demands, justice executes. Divine righteousness is imputed to every person that believes in Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life.

**The Justice of God:** This attribute reflects the fairness of God in that He does not show partiality. Justice is mankind's point of reference with the essence of God following the fall of Adam. Justice enforces whatever righteousness demands: whatever righteousness approves, justice must bless; whatever righteousness rejects, justice must discipline.

Righteousness is the principle of the integrity of God while justice is its function.

**The Love of God:** Love is the innate quality of absolute benevolence that does not require inspiration. It is never emotional but always logical. It is an attribute, therefore, it does not vacillate. Since all the attributes of God are immutable then His love is unfailing and unchanging. John writes in 1 John 4:8 and 16 that "God is love." John uses **ἀγάπη (agápē)**, the Greek word for love, in an intransitive sense meaning that God's love does not require an object.

Divine benevolence is expressed through God's love which, along with righteousness and justice, combines to form the integrity of God. The love of God is never separated from His righteousness and justice. Since God is immutable, His love does not increase or diminish.

God's love is personal when it is directed toward a perfect object such as God the Son or God the Holy Spirit.

His love is expressed as divine self-esteem when directed toward His own perfection.

It is unconditional when directed toward objects that are without the virtue of perfection such as human beings who are born spiritually dead. The unconditional love of God is expressed in the provision of Jesus Christ as the solution to the sin problem.

**The Integrity of God:** The integrity of God is made up of His righteousness, justice, love, and omniscience and functions under His policy of grace. Righteousness speaks of the perfect divine standard which cannot be compromised. God's Righteousness condemns sin and therefore He cannot have a relationship with anything that is less than perfect. Therefore, righteousness demands righteousness. Whatever His righteousness demands, His justice must execute.

**The Omniscience of God:** God knows perfectly, eternally, and simultaneously all that is knowable, both actual and possible. He has always known everything past, present, and future. Therefore, for God, the future is as perspicuous to Him as the past. Since God's knowledge is infinite, all things are completely and clearly comprehensible to Him.

Before the creation of the angels, the universe, or the human race, God knew every thought, decision, and action of every creature who ever lived although He never interfered with the free will of any.

**The Immutability of God:** God is unchangeable. All of His attributes are in a consistently stable status quo of perfection, eternally unalterable and unfailing. His omnipotence enables Him to administer His creation and His creatures. His omnipresence indicates that He is consistently aware of all things. His veracity insures that His thoughts, decisions, and actions are absolute truth.

From these brief definitions we are able to discern that God's entire character is capable of understanding real from potential, truth from lie, good from evil, righteous from iniquitous, noble from base, and right from wrong.

Since God knows all that is knowable, He is able to catalog the choices of every person in human history.

From the source of His integrity, God constructed a system that, while allowing human free will to remain free, His plan moves forward to its ultimate successful conclusion which is designed for His glory.

Therefore, mankind is placed in a system in which compliance with divine policies, beginning with the gospel, will result in blessing and reward while noncompliance will result in discipline and suffering.

The doctrine that explains all this is that of the divine decree which is defined as follows:

**Visual #2:**  
**Definition of the  
Divine Decree**

The decree of God is His eternal, holy, wise, and sovereign purpose, *comprehending* simultaneously all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, and relations and determining their certain futurity.

Various attributes of God's essence are related to His "purpose" for angelic and human history. The source of the divine decree is identified as the omniscience of God "comprehending" all things in eternity past. Divine volition is depicted as "determining" or choosing, before anything existed, which things would actually become historical events.

The several contents of this one eternal purpose are, because of the limitations of our mentality and faculties, necessarily perceived by us in partial aspects in both logical and revealed relations from Scripture. For this reason we often use the plural "decrees" to express the many facets of God's all inclusive plan. In reality it is all *one* decree, given in eternity past in less than a second and covering everything in all of what to us is past, present, and future history (Psalm 148:6b, "He has made a decree which will not pass away.").

The decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of events which will happen in time and regarding the precise order and manner of their occurrence.<sup>1</sup>

Human free will was known to Him in eternity past. The choices we make are set in stone but only because God, through omniscience, observed our choices. Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken" amplifies the point:

**The Road Not Taken**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:

<sup>1</sup> R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Integrity of God*, 4th ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2005), 297.

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —  
I took the one less traveled by  
And that has made all the difference.<sup>2</sup>

### The Computer of the Divine Decree:

1. The divine decree contains the will of God. His omniscience discerns every event that occurs in time and recognizes the exact order and manner of their occurrence.
2. The “will of God” may be defined two ways: (1) It is generally understood to refer to what God expects of His creatures, and (2) with regard to the divine decree, the will of God establishes with certainty what things would actually occur and those things that would not.
3. Since the issue in the angelic conflict is free will, then many things that do occur are in opposition to what God desires.
4. This is in opposition to the first definition of the will of God. He did not desire that these things take place. But, in recognition of human free will, His decree recognizes human decisions to be what they are and it is His will that these decisions remain free.
5. Each one of you is part of the decree which God willed to exist. You were brought into this world through the volitional decisions of your parents. God did not cause the physical union of any couple.
6. He recognized that these unions would occur and chose to select some of the resultant offspring and not to select others.
7. Selection is a technical term related to the imputation of soul life to biological life at physical birth resulting in human life.
8. Free will procreates; God selects. Selection means that God has meaning and purpose for everyone regardless of the circumstances of his birth.
9. Although the selected person is physically alive he is spiritually dead and in need of the Savior. Free will allows the person the option of believing or disbelieving in Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life.
10. Regardless of that decision, the soul never dies.

#### **Visual #3:**

**Divine  
Imputations  
at Physical &  
Spiritual  
Birth**

<sup>2</sup> Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken,” in *Adventures in American Literature*, Edmund Fuller and B. Jo Kinnick (Chicago: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1951, 1963), 252.