

18. It is pertinent to remember the definition and the details of the **Doctrine of the Divine Decree**:

- A. **Definition:** The Decree of God is His eternal, holy, wise, and sovereign purpose comprehending simultaneously all things that ever were and will be in their causes, conditions, successions, relations, and determining their certain futurity.
1. The source of the Decree is divine omniscience which God knew simultaneously in eternity past everything that would happen in human history—the thought, decision, and action of every person in human history and everything in relation to all things pertaining to it.
 2. The several contents of this one eternal purpose are, because of the limitation of our faculties, necessarily perceived by us in partial aspects and logical relations from Scripture.
 3. Therefore, we classify “the decrees” as being plural, but in reality it is all one Decree.
 4. Thus, the Divine Decree is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of all events which will happen in time and the precise manner and order of their occurrence.
 5. The Decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of all events which will happen in time and the precise manner and order of their occurrence.
 6. The term, Decree, refers to the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all of the events of the universe, both angelic and human.
 7. The Decree is the all-inclusive will and purpose of God concerning all that ever was or will be and which He Himself alone must have objectively designed for His own glory and for His satisfaction.
 8. The Divine Decree is efficacious in that it determines all that ever was, all that is, and all that ever will be. The Decree is viewed by man from two standpoints: **(1) Efficacious**: that which is directly wrought by God from His sovereignty and **(2) Permissive** which is appointed by God to be accomplished by secondary causes or by the free will and action of agents, i.e., the free will of man.

(End JAS4-65.Rev. See JAS4-66.Rev for continuation of study at p. 651.)



9. **The Divine Decree has numerous characteristics:**

1. They are all comprehensive which means that not the slightest uncertainty could exist as to one of the smallest or most insignificant of events without confusion to all.

Therefore, all events in the life of every person are interwoven and interdependent. God is not the author of confusion.

Everything you think, why you think it, and the environment in which you think it, was all known to God in eternity past. This says everything in life is a chain of cause-and-effect events.
2. The decrees are eternal. God is not gaining in knowledge. Omniscience means God knew simultaneously everything that ever was or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, and relations.
3. God is perfect; therefore, His decrees are perfect. They are not perfect in content because they include sin, failure, human good, and evil. But everything that would ever happen was known to God. His is a perfect system of comprehension.
4. The decree is unchangeable and certain. Nothing could possibly occur to necessitate a change. God is never found not knowing something. God has never had to make changes or any adjustments in the divine decree.
5. The decree is the free choice of God in eternity past. This is the central and most important point in this doctrine which every pastor and evangelist must understand. God is not bound to follow any necessary path. Having decreed, however, He is bound by His infinite faithfulness and truth to complete what He has begun.

10. The free choice of God is very important, because God, from His own sovereign volition, invented free will in two categories of creatures—angels and mankind, so that both categories can choose for or against God.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His production, having been created in Christ Jesus for good achievements which God has prepared in advance [**divine provisions**], that we should walk [περιπατέω (*peripatéō*)] by means of them. (EXT)

B. The Decree and Omniscience

1. The decree of God is the sum total of God's plan designed in eternity past relating to all events of every classification collected into one single all-comprehensive whole through the omniscience of God.
2. The omniscience of God is the key to understanding the decree. God has three categories of divine knowledge: **(a)** Self-knowledge: Each person of the Godhead has infinite and eternal knowledge about Himself and the other two members of the Trinity. **(b)** Omniscience: God knows all the knowable simultaneously about creatures, both the actual and the possible, but only the actual is programmed into the decree. **(c)** Foreknowledge: It merely acknowledges what is in the decree but does not make anything certain; the believer still has free will that is uncoerced.

C. The Decree and Election

1. Election is the sovereign right of God over His creation. It is the expression of the sovereign will of God for every believer in eternity past for fantastic blessings both in time and in eternity.

Ephesians 1:4 God the Father has elected us for Himself in Christ before the creation of the world for the purpose that we keep on being set apart to God, holy and blameless in His presence. (EXT)

2. Election and Predestination provide equal privilege and equal opportunity for all believers.
3. The equal privilege of election is God's decision to make every Church Age believer a royal priest forever.
4. The equal opportunity of election is God's provision of logistical grace support for every Church Age believer.
5. The equal privilege of predestination is God's decision to enter every Church Age believer into union with Christ forever through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and resultant positional sanctification.
6. This results in the creation of a new spiritual species.
7. The equal opportunity of predestination is God's provision of the divine dynasphere for the Church Age believer in time.

8. Under the omniscience of God, all decrees were simultaneously known to God and simultaneously decreed by God in eternity past. There never was a time when God did not know all that was knowable.
9. Divine knowledge about creatures is programmed into the computer of the divine decree. While the possible and alternatives to reality are known to God, only the reality is programmed into the computer of the divine decree.

D. The Will of God and the Divine Decree

1. God did not decree Himself to be. God eternally existed before and separate from the decree. Therefore, the decree does not act upon God, but God acts upon the decree.
2. God's decrees are efficacious, determining all that ever was or will be, including the directive, permissive, and overruling will of God.
3. All things depend on God's will and nothing is certain apart from God's will. There comes a point in theology where God's will and the decrees must be understood as synonymous.
4. God's decrees originate from His own omniscience in eternity past separating fact from fiction.
5. Therefore, distinction must be made between the omniscience of God and the foreknowledge of God.
 - a. God's decrees do not originate from His foreknowledge.
 - b. The foreknowledge of God makes nothing certain; it merely perceives what is certain, what is decreed. Only the decrees or foreordination makes anything certain.
 - c. Therefore, nothing can be foreknown until it is first decreed. This means you never have to run to God and say, "Oh God, help."
 - d. Foreknowledge is cognizance of what is decreed.
6. Distinction has to 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, say, or do. Many things in the decrees are not the desires of God.
 - a. Sin, human good, and evil are not the desires of God but are in the decrees because they are performed by our free will.

