

The Pursuit Of God

Session Nine / August 17, 2016

The Decrees Of God (His eternal Purpose)

1 We have spent the last few weeks studying the Attributes of God – “that which is true of
2 Him.” Today we open the pages of His Word to illuminate THE DECREES OF GOD.
3 What are we talking about here?
4

5

The Decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to His will, whereby He has foreordained whatever comes to pass. His Decrees do not negate the responsibility of you and me, nor does it mean that God is responsible for the sin or negative activities of His human creation. But, as we have already seen in God’s attribute of omniscience, God knows all things actual as well as potential. God has eternally known all events that have occurred, are now occurring and that will occur in the future. Here is a text verse that makes this clear: Isaiah 46:9-10 **Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, [10] Declaring 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: KJV**

6
7 Tonight we put on our thinking caps and follow the Biblical admonition, expressed there
8 dozens of times, to “reason together” with the Lord.
9

10 QUESTION: Do we live in a universe floating on whims and fantasies? Is there any
11 purpose behind it all? Is there accountability necessitated and, if so, to whom? Is life
12 based on reason? How did it all create - or did life just “happen?”
13

14 In the dim dawning of eternity, our Almighty God decreed everything - or by His
15 omniscience KNEW what would happen and allowed it. Even the life, death and
16 resurrection of Jesus were determined (DECREED) by our Heavenly Father millennia
17 beforehand: Acts 2:23 **Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and
18 foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:**
19

20 God knows it all from the beginning and His purposes allow it all to happen. How can
21 this be? What about all the suffering? The wars? The pestilences? The Stalins and
22 Hitlers? Has God decreed out upcoming election? Shockingly – YES!

1 This requires some serious deliberation on our part. Based upon what? Based upon
2 what the Word of God declares in no uncertain terms. If we do not know the Word, we
3 do not know or understand the decrees. Thus we are left in hopeless quandary. But we
4 do not have to stay that way, do we? The Decrees of God not eradicate all efforts by
5 humans but rather nestle them in God's will and direction. We have a sure foundation
6 because of them. So let's see what we are to learn about God's Decrees from Holy
7 Scripture.

8
9 1. THE DECREES OF GOD ARE HIS ETERNAL PURPOSE. They are divinely
10 intentional!

11
12 From time immemorial the Creator has made His will and pleasure known to us. He
13 made those plans in eternity and they remain unchanged.

14
15 2. GOD'S DECREES ARE BASED ON HIS KNOWLEDGE, WHICH IS FULL,
16 COMPLETE AND HOLY.

17
18 Would we think, even for a moment, that God would purpose anything that was wrong or
19 immoral? Never. God is omniscient, all-knowing, and His counsel is perfect.

20
21 3. ALL OF GOD'S DECREES ARE BASED ON HIS FREEDOM TO ACT AND
22 CHOOSE AS HE WILL. *God is not obligated to purpose anything but purposes*
23 *without any constraints upon Him. The only necessity laid upon Him in this respect is*
24 *the necessity that comes from His own attributes as a holy and wise God.* Thiessen

25
26 4. GOD'S DECREES ARE TO BRING GLORY TO HIM. Those purposes do not
27 primarily aim at the happiness of you and me or even at the perfecting of the saints,
28 although they may bring about those purposes.

29
30 So much of today's "popular preaching" is geared around the happiness of the hearer -
31 and while important it is not God's primary concern. As Leonard Ravenhill used to say,
32 ***"God is not nearly interested in your happiness as He is your holiness."*** God's
33 decrees are mainly for His own plans and purposes. When you and I do not see God
34 doing what we want, we need to consider, "Well, everything He does is for His own
35 divine reasons, then what He is doing in and through me, whether I'm thrilled or not, is
36 for the good!" That kind of conclusion can only be brought about by maturing followers
37 of Christ.

38
39 5. GOD'S DECREES CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO CATEGORIES:
40 EFFECTIVENESS AND PERMISSIVE. Certainly it was never God decree that sent

1 Abraham into the tent of the Egyptian woman Hagar, from which came Ishmael, but He
2 allowed it to happen (permitted it), though it came with tough ramifications.

3
4 God never meant for King David to entertain Bathsheba in his bed. And there were dire
5 consequences from it - at least a four-fold penalty that caused David unbelievable pain
6 and difficulty. But from Bathsheba came Solomon.

7
8 So there are things which God purposes that He deems efficacious (or important, capable
9 of bringing about the desired good), yet there are other things that God allows to happen.
10 He will determine, however, to get good for Himself no matter what happens.

11
12 6. GOD'S DECREES EMBRACE ALL THAT COMES TO PASS – PAST, PRESENT
13 AND FUTURE.

14
15 God knew about WWII a billion light years ago, but did not stop it. Why? I don't
16 know. Someday in Glory we will be shown the "why" of everything.

17
18 **GOD, THE MASTER DESIGNER**

19
20 When this sanctuary was erected about a quarter of a century ago, the building didn't "just
21 happen." Land had to be considered. The size of the structure had to be determined.
22 The cost, of course, had to be figured in. This building was built by mortals who
23 understood that planning was necessary. How much more so then did God, the Eternal
24 One, decree (or plan) how life should be structured, how the universes should be put
25 together, and how the human body should be designed.

26
27 A new book has been released, *Undeniable: How Biology Confirms Our Intuition That*
28 *Life Is Designed*, by Dr. Douglas Axe, a molecular biologist. Axe writes that his years
29 of research into the genius of life has led him to conclude THAT THE ANSWER CAN
30 BE ONLY GOD. According to Axe, the research he provides with his book disproves
31 Darwin's theory of evolution, revealing a "gaping hole has been at evolution's center
32 from the beginning."

33
34 Dr. Phillip E. Johnson, Professor Emeritus of Law at U.C. Berkeley and author of *Darwin*
35 *on Trial* calls Axe's new research, "bold, insightful and world-changing."

36
37 The author of *The Science of God*" and *God, According to God*, Gerald Schroeder says,
38 "In *Undeniable* we are privy to a first-hand account of the evidence for intelligence and
39 the painful cost of swimming against the flow of accepted but un-proven theory."
40

1 In the light of constantly revealing knowledge about the universe, I am appalled that
2 students sit mute while their teachers inundate them with crazy theories about monkeys
3 and the development of our ancestors. The theory of evolution is just that – a theory.
4 The evidence of the universe points to a Creator Who designed it all and decreed its
5 existence. Genesis 1-3 tell of God’s decree initiated by: “And God said....”
6

7 **7. SINCE GOD IS OMNIPOTENT AND NO ONE SUPERCEDES HIM IN**
8 **AUTHORITY OR POWER, WE KNOW THAT HIS DECREES CAME FROM HIS**
9 **OWN VOLITION AND WERE COERCED BY NO ONE. Rev. 4:11 **Thou art****
10 **worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all**
11 **things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**
12

13 Verse after verse in scripture tells us the authority of God and His decrees and many
14 involve you and me: Jeremiah 29:11 **For I know the thoughts that I think toward**
15 **you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.**
16 His plan for you, His decree if you will, if for good, not evil and to give you a fulfilling
17 and challenging life. Yet we fight against that in order to pursue our own way.
18

19 HOW CAN WE BE SO SURE OF THESE DECREES? 20

21 Again we go to the scriptures, our authority and base of everything.
22

23 **Isaiah 14:26-27 This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this**
24 **is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. [27] For the Lord of hosts hath**
25 **purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall**
26 **turn it back?**
27

28 Don’t give Satan so much credit. He does not deserve it! His authority is limited;
29 God’s is not. He is geographically contained; God is not.
30

31 **Isaiah 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none**
32 **else; I am God, and there is none like me, [10] Declaring the end from the beginning,**
33 **and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall**
34 **stand, and I will do all my pleasure:**
35

36 Satan himself cannot challenge God or His authority; His decrees are eternally binding:
37 Daniel 4:35 **And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he**
38 **doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the**
39 **earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?**
40

What a powerful scripture! Do you know who said that? None other than the most

1 powerful human being on earth at that time, Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. He,
2 before whom every monarch bowed, could not exercise his will over the Word of God.
3 Read that statement again: Daniel 4:35 **And all the inhabitants of the earth are**
4 **reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and**
5 **among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him,**
6 **What doest thou?**

7
8 This all comes down really to who you believe. Do you succumb to the whim of world
9 opinion, the taunts of Satan's court jesters, or God Himself. It ought to be an easy
10 decision! As Joshua said, "As for me.....I will serve God!"

11 12 RAMIFICATIONS OF GOD'S DECREES

13
14 **1. The Universe is Stable** Why? Because God decreed it. Psalm 119:89-91
15 **For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. [90] Thy faithfulness is unto all**
16 **generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. [91] They continue this**
17 **day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants.**

18
19 **2. Because of God's decree and purpose you and I have free moral will - that is, we**
20 **can act either good or evil. Our choice.** Ephes. 2:10 **For we are his**
21 **workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before**
22 **ordained that we should walk in them.** God decreed that we should be worthy of His
23 creative genius. Satan persuades us all too often to me far less. Why do we accept less
24 than His best for our lives?

25
26 **3. The nations of the world think they are autonomous and can do whatever is in**
27 **their best interest. God decree expresses otherwise: Acts 17:26 And hath made**
28 **of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath**
29 **determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;**

30
31 Human government, the United Nations, etc., would truly like to believe they make the
32 decisions that form the national boundaries and powers. Not so. They cannot violate
33 God's decrees.

34
35 **4. The duration of your life is limited by God's decree.** Job 14:5 **Seeing his days**
36 **are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his**
37 **bounds that he cannot pass;**

38
39 We attempt to take proper care of these mortal vessels, and rightly so. But God knows
40 how long we are going to live. He knows the exact moment of my leaving this body and

1 has known it for all time and eternity. Whatever that duration is, it will not exceed nor
2 come short of God's awareness of it.

3
4 **5. God not only knows the duration of your life but He knows how it will end.**

5 John 21:19 This spake he (Jesus), signifying by what death he (Peter) should glorify
6 God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

7
8 So many professing believers have a great fear of death (I suppose because they are not
9 sure of their eternal destiny). I have had Christians tell me of their fear of flying. You
10 have more of a chance of dying in a Honda than you do a 747. Many non-believers can
11 only fly if they are buttressed by booze. That is so sad. God's love eliminates fear (1
12 John 4:18 **There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear**
13 **hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.**) God has already decreed
14 your years of human life and you are in His hands.

15
16 **6. God has decreed that those who believe in Jesus and have committed their lives**
17 **to Him shall be saved.** 1 Cor. 2:7 **But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,**
18 **even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:**

19
20 Some Bible versions use the word "predestined" rather than "ordained" in this verse.
21 That word "predestined" can be confusing. It simply means the knowledge of God
22 includes His awareness of those who will be saved and those who will be lost long before
23 time began. God does not make those persons be saved or lost, otherwise we would no
24 longer have free will. And He has decreed that Calvary covers all my transgressions if I
25 receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.

26
27 **7. God has decreed the extent and composition of His Kngdom.** 1 Cor. 15:23 **But**
28 **every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's**
29 **at his coming.**

30
31 When Jesus came forth from the tomb, He had about Himself the embodiment of life that
32 you and I will have after the Rapture or Resurrection. He was not only resurrected, He
33 was glorified with a body that had no limitations. That's what the word "firstfruits"
34 means in that Corinthian passage. Another word for it would be prototype.

35
36 An old hymn promises:

37 *Jesus shall reign wherein the sun doth its successive courses run;*

38 *His Kingdom spread from shore to shore til moons shall wax and wane no more.*

39
40 There can be no question of this Kingdom's coming for God has decreed it.

1 WHY SHOULD WE KNOW ABOUT GOD’S DECREES?
2

3 There are so many benefits in knowing as much about God as we possibly can. By
4 knowing of His decrees we:

5
6 1. GAIN CONFIDENCE IN OUR FAITH IN GOD
7

8 We do not torment ourselves with wondering about “tomorrow” for we know what God
9 has decreed and the future is in His hands. No power on earth can alter what He has
10 declared in His perfect Word.

11
12 Romans 8:28 **And we know that all things work together for good to them that love**
13 **God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.** That is God’s decree to us
14 and it is eternally binding. But we must remember that what we call “good,” God may
15 not necessarily so consider it. That’s why we have faith in Him, not our circumstances
16 nor our surroundings.

17
18 2. WE ARE LED TO BE HUMBLE BEFORE HIM.
19

20 Zech. 4:6 **Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.**
21 There is nothing more wasteful than bragging of our own strength or capabilities. If it
22 were not for God and His decrees we would be nothing.

23
24 It is sometimes alarming to see preachers declare their ministry by their own name.
25 Such as “John Doe Ministries” or “Mary Jones Ministries.” How audacious! I would be
26 frightened to signal our work here as “Dan Betzer Ministries” and won’t do so though
27 others might so declare it. It must always be “Jesus Christ Ministries” or something very
28 similar.
29

Billy Graham once had a huge electronic sign lauding him taken down and he said, “That sign frightens me for God will not share His glory with anyone.”

30
31 3. WE ARE WARNED TO BE AWARE OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.
32

33 In His Mount Olivet prophetic discourse, found in Matthew 24 and 25, Jesus taught:
34 Matthew 24:36-44 **But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of**
35 **heaven, but my Father only. [37] But as the days of Noe (Noah) were, so shall also**
36 **the coming of the Son of man be. [38] For as in the days that were before the flood**
37 **they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that**

1 **Noe entered into the ark, [39] And knew not until the flood came, and took them all**
2 **away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. [40] Then shall two be in the**
3 **field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. [41] Two women shall be grinding at**
4 **the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.**

5 **[42] Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. [43] But**
6 **know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief**
7 **would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be**
8 **broken up. [44] Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the**
9 **Son of man cometh.**

10
11 **4. GOD'S DECREES GIVE US HOPE.**
12

13 If your hope is based on the upcoming election and the respective candidates, you must be
14 pretty miserable. You must wonder if there is any sanity left in the world. But we have
15 hope in Christ -

- 16 • For Salvation of our souls
- 17 • For Healing for our worn out bodies
- 18 • For the Needs of our lives
- 19 • For the Coming Kingdom of Christ
- 20 • For Eternity with Jesus

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23 Next week: SOTERIOLOGY - the Purpose, Plan and Method of God
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