

This We Believe

(Prepared by Ps Tony for GBC Evening Service August 9th 2020)

Back to The Basics – No 4: God Acts According to His Stated Decree

What are some of the major issues facing the world today? (Write down any answers below).

1. What do we mean by the Decree of God?

The decree of God is His eternal plan or purpose, in which He has foreordained all things that come to pass. *"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."* Isa. 46:10.

a. Characteristics of the decree.

- The decree of God is founded in wisdom, Eph. 3:9-11, though we do not always understand it.
- It was formed in the depths of eternity, and is therefore eternal in the strictest sense of the word, Eph. 3:11.
- Moreover, it is effectual, so that everything that is included in it certainly comes to pass, Isa. 46:10.
- The plan of God is also unchangeable, because He is faithful and true, Job 28:13, 14; Luke 22:22.
- It is unconditional, that is, its execution does not depend on any action of man but even renders such action certain, Acts 2:23; Eph. 2:8.
- Moreover, it is all-inclusive, embracing the good and the wicked actions of people, Eph. 2:10; Acts 2:28, contingent events, Gen. 50:20, the duration of all people's life, Job 14:5; Ps. 39:4, and the place of everyone's habitation, Acts 17:26. With respect to sin it is permissive.

b. The Decree of all Decrees as the Triune God! - God's Decree to show and share the Fruit of His Glory.

(Nt: Think upon what Isaiah 42:8 might mean in light of the above heading and verses below).

God decrees to reveal His glory to all creation and through all creation and He has done so, continues to do so, and will so in the future.

- The heaven decree God's glory (Psalm 19:1).
- The whole earth is full of his glory (Isaiah 6:3).
- His people are to declare His glory to all other peoples (1 Chronicles 16:24).
- All people are created for God's glory be they among his elect or not (Romans 9:21-23).
- The Triune God has shown and revealed his glory to all people and so all are called to live for his glory (1 Cor 10:31).
- There are degrees of seeing God's glory and therefore His Spirit's purpose is that we be changed more and more into the likeness of His glory (2 Cor 3:18).
- We should therefore all be praying for God's glory to be operative over all the earth (Psalm 57:5).
- Which is a prayer that will be answered in full, as we are told that Jesus will come in great glory (Matthew 24:30).
- Every knee will bow in heaven and on earth to acknowledge His glory (Phil 2:2-11).
- "And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isaiah 40:5).
- The new earth is where His redeemed will spend eternity and the city where they will live, "will need no sun or moon to shine for the glory of God will give it light and the lamb will be its lamp" (Rev 21:23).
- For our Triune God is the King of Glory (Psalm 24:8).

2. Three aspect of God's decree that we will focus on tonight and the issue of order.

- **Genesis 1-3.** A Planet / A Purpose / People (Adam and Eve)
- **Genesis 12: 1-9.** A Person (Abraham) / Purpose / Place
- **Acts 17:16-31.** A Planet / A People (all people) / Purpose

a. God decrees and therefore creates **a planet and a place** for His people and glory, for both now and into the future.

b. God decrees **a purpose** for all His creation for His glory, for both now and into the future.

c. God decrees **a people** for His glory, and for their enjoyment of Him, for both now and into the future.

To show the power and importance of God's decree in saving and securing a people for himself, God the Father, Jesus the Son, and Holy Spirit reveal the certainty of this by showing how the decree is both past, present and future for His people. This can be seen in the following ways:

- That the decree to save a people is only by God's will and power and not from one's self (Eph 2:4-9).
- The decree is before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4; Romans 9:29).
- The decree to save some and not everyone, but is special and particular to those whom are called and chosen (John 6:44; 65; Matthew 24:14; Romans 11:5,6).
- It is not based upon one's own doing of anything good or bad, but upon God's decree and Trinitarian work (Romans 9:11-26).
- The decree is based upon grace alone through saving faith which is produced as a work of the Spirit of God (Eph 1:11; 1 Cor 2:9-16; Titus 3:5-7).
- The decree will be enacted upon you and in you and you and everyone else decreed will respond to the gospel of salvation in Jesus (John 6:37-39; Romans 8:28-30).
- If elected by God's decree you cannot be lost but will be raised up on that last day by Jesus as he never fails to do the will of His Father (John 6:40-41; 10:28-30).
- If decreed for salvation through Jesus you will exhibit faith in Jesus and the fruit of His Spirit and a great love for the lost and His people (1 John 1:6-10; 2:3-6; 9-11; 15,16; 3:14 & 15; 23 & 24; 4:19 & 20).

“Men treat God's sovereignty as a theme for controversy, but in Scripture it is a matter for worship”

J.I Packer

Small Group Questions & Prayer:

God has gone to great lengths to communicate these three major aspects of His decree to all people.

- What are some of the reasons God has done this?
- Do any of these aspects of God's decree speak to the major issues facing the world today that we raised at the start? How so?
- How might we pray now about all that we have heard about the decree of God tonight?