

**GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
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**EPHESIANS - 0290-005
DIVINE DECREES, PART 2. 5 CHARACTERISTICS
EPH 1:1; ISA 46:8-11; JOH 13:1-7.**

We are still studying EPH 1:1 which says Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

In EPH 1:1, so far, we have covered the first phrase in Paul, an apostle,

Next, we have the phrase “of Christ Jesus”

“of Christou Ieesou” = Christ Jesus – there is no preposition (of) in the original language.

The translators add it to make it more understandable.

Now, why do translations differ when it comes to the word order of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ some such as;

The NAS = EPH 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus

The K.J.'s = Eph 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ

Here again is another reason why we study from the NAS and not the K.J.'s because;

In the original manuscripts it says "Christ Jesus" not "Jesus Christ," which basically follows the rule of emphasizing the deity of Christ, when Christ is put first, or emphasizing the humanity of Christ when Jesus is placed first. (Repeat)

We noted Matthew on the Humanity of Jesus and we noted Romans on the deity of Christ.

When Jesus is placed first, the passage normally emphasizes the human part of our Lord Jesus Christ, -- when Christ is placed first, the passage normally emphasizes the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The next phrase in EPH 1:1 is;

"by the will of God" which is literally, "through the will of God," = dia plus the genitive singular of thelama which means God's will, purpose, design which reveals His Divine decrees.

And this brings up one of the most important doctrines in Ephesians, which is;

(Y) The Doctrine of Divine Decrees.

(Y) Point 1. Definition and Description.

The decree of God refers to His eternal, holy, wise and sovereign purpose comprehending simultaneously all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, relations, and determining the certainty of their future.

The decree of God refers to His eternal (always existed),

Again, He is Holy = (perfect integrity),

wise (the application of omniscience to creation),

and sovereign purpose, comprehending simultaneously all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions (status), successions (interaction with others), relations, and determining the certainty of their future.

This definition begins by expressing the source of the decrees which is found in the word "comprehending."

This refers to two main principles concerning the essence of God; His omniscience and His omnipresence.

Concerning omniscience, God knew about you billions and billions of years ago and He knew everything you would ever think, say, or do, and He entered all those actions into the divine decrees.

Concerning omnipresence, God says that He would always be with us forever; MAT 28:20b “teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Let’s take the first one that relates to the divine decrees which is the omniscience of God.

The definition also expresses the attributes of God in terms of divine will in human history.

The definition emphasizes that the omniscience of God knew simultaneously in eternity past everything that would happen in human history (the thoughts, actions and decisions of every person in his life).

Look at ISA 46.

ISA 46:8 "Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors.

ISA 46:9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; {I am} God, and there is no one like Me,

ISA 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

ISA 46:11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned {it, surely} I will do it.

Furthermore, the omniscience of God knew everything in relation to all of the things pertaining to it.

Now, while all of this will be technical, it is very important for you to understand this because, it is a reminder to you that;

Billions and billions of years ago before man existed God had you personally in mind.

And what a comfort that is!

And this entire principle is basically discussed when we get to verse 3 and how and why it relates to the divine decrees.

For in EPH 1:3 we read;

EPH 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

This entire verse speaks of the divine decrees, especially the last half which says who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

All those blessings were deposited into the computer of divine decrees.

So, just relax and let God the Holy Spirit communicate to you what you are able to comprehend.

The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass.

As we have noted in ISA 43:7, as a part of the divine decrees, God has decreed that why He created us.

Go back to ISA 43:7 Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made." (Rev 4:11)

What about the wickedness and evil that exists among angels and humans, how does that relate to the divine decrees?

PRO 16:4 The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.

Prin-The decrees are the all-inclusive will and purpose of God concerning all that ever was or ever will be, which originates wholly within Himself.

So;

The decrees are the all-inclusive will and purpose of God concerning all that ever was or ever will be, which originates wholly within Himself and which He must have objectively designed for His own glory and for His satisfaction. (Read-comment-read again.)

And the fact that our life hangs by a very fine thread for His glory and for His satisfaction ought to cause all believers to take their calling and election seriously.

So; By accommodation to creatures of time and space subject to subdivisions reaching out to such minute details as the falling of the sparrow, all decrees were simultaneous, not given by stages.

And therefore, it is most unfortunate that our finite mind must understand these things by stages rather than as one divine decree.

However;

Because of the finite mental limitations of man, we must perceive them by logical and chronological progression.

When thinking properly, the human mind thinks according to logic and chronology or the order of things that follow.

So, much for Point 1

(Y) Point 2. There are five characteristics of the divine decrees.

The first characteristics of the divine decrees is;

(Y) The decrees of God 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.

In other words,

You cannot change what God has decreed to happen.

You say:

What about my decisions that I would make”

Well, The Lord knew about them from eternity past and they were placed in His divine decrees.

You cannot change history because history has already been written and revealed in the divine decrees.

Therefore,

All events in the life of every person are interwoven and interdependent.

This means that;

All the decisions that we would ever make, with the people that surround us, are all related to the divine decrees.

Think about it;

Everything you think, why you think it, and the environment in which you think it, was all known to God in eternity past.

This also says everything in life is a chain of cause-and-effect events.

This is one of the meanings behind such passages as;

LUK 12:6 “Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And {yet} not one of them is forgotten before God.”

LUK 12:7 “Indeed, (even)the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Now, although it may not seem to some of you that your life has been blended perfectly together by God, in heaven you will understand that it was!

God is perfect and therefore He gave you life at the exact time that He knew would be the best time and environment for you personally.

God is perfect and therefore He chose who your parents at the exact time that He knew would be the best time and environment for you personally.

He picked your parents!

He picked the color of your skin!

He picked your gender! Male or female (No alternative lifestyle.)

He picked your environment!

He even picked what genes you would have in your DNA which makes you unique!

So;

Everything that every person does or will do has always been known to God and God has decreed for all these things to exist.

Everything you think, why you think it, and even the environment in which you think it, was all known to God in eternity past.

Still under Point 2. The five characteristics of the divine decrees.

The second characteristic of the divine decrees is;

(Y) The divine decrees are eternal.

God is not gaining in knowledge.

What God has known at any time He has always known.

Omniscience means God knew simultaneously everything that ever was or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, and relations.

Understanding the omniscience of God is a great factor in understanding the divine decrees.

And this is why we spent some time on the omniscience of God!

Therefore,

The decrees are the eternal and simultaneous knowledge of omniscience expressing the will of God by which all things are brought into being and controlled and are made subject to His divine pleasure, and result in His eternal glory.

The third characteristic of the divine decrees is;

(Y) God is perfect; therefore, His decrees are perfect.

Now this is vital for you to understand.

They are not perfect in content, because they include evil, sin, failure, etc.

But everything that would ever happen was always known to God.

His is a perfect system of comprehension.

It does not always appear that way as they relate to us because we have a tendency to be relative and temporal and not realize that God sees the end of what He's doing!

As our Lord said to Peter, beginning in JOH 13:1.

JOH 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

JOH 13:2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,

JOH 13:3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God,

JOH 13:4 rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about.

JOH 13:5 Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

JOH 13:6 And so He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?"

JOH 13:7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter."

God sees the end of what He's doing!

And in Deu 32:4;

DEU 32:4 "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.

The fourth characteristic of the divine decrees is;

(Y) The decrees are unchangeable and certain.

Nothing can possibly occur to necessitate a change.

This means God is never caught "not knowing" something.

As I have told you many times before,

God is never shocked at what we think, say, or do, because He knew it billions and billions of years ago in eternity past.

And;

When you see passages like Gen 6, where God seems to change his mind about creating man, it is still a part of the divine decrees.

It is not a change of the divine decrees, so let me illustrate this with the passage in GEN 6.

GEN 6:1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them,

GEN 6:2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

GEN 6:3 Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

GEN 6:4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

GEN 6:5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

GEN 6:6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

GEN 6:7 And the Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them."

Here is a passage where the K.J.'s Bible is a little more accurate;

(K.J.) Gen 6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

God does not repent, this is an anthropopathism,

An anthropopathism ascribes to God a human characteristic which God does not actually possess, but is used to reveal and explain God's policy toward mankind in terms of human frame of reference by the use of language of accommodation.

God has never had to make any changes or any adjustments in the divine decrees; Mal 3:6, Heb 13:8.

MAL 3:6 "For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

HEB 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.

The fifth characteristics of the divine decrees is;

(Y) The decrees are the free choice of God in eternity past.

This is the most important point to understand, one which many theologians do not understand.

God is not bound to follow any necessary path.

Since we are in the book of Genesis, go forward to GEN 16:9.

GEN 16:9 Then the angel of the Lord [Jesus Christ] said to her [Hagar], "Return to your mistress [Sarah], and submit yourself to her authority."

GEN 16:10 Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count."

"Moreover" has to do with the fact that if Hagar obeys TLJC, His will is to bless her, but she must obey Him in order for His blessing to be upon her.

The point is that this seems to be a conditional promise, because it is ----- Hagar.

God is not bound to follow any necessary path.

So, God is not bound to follow any necessary path.

Having decreed, He is bound by His infinite faithfulness and truth to complete what He has begun.

And this includes completing the work He has begun in you!

PHI 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who has begun in you an absolute good work will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.

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.

However, remember that both categories of creatures were created for God's glory!

REV 4:11 "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created."

It is because of the will of God that we were created and that we exist.

However, it is also because of the will of God that we possess a free will.

Pro 16:4 again says that

PRO 16:4 "The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil."

This does not mean that He made the wicked, wicked.

It simply means that ultimately God will be glorified either by the positive volition of His creatures or through negative volition.

ROM 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

ROM 11:34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?

ROM 11:35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again?

ROM 11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

HEB 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

So.

The decrees of God are the adopted and chosen plan of God for all His works.

Even the plan to crucify TLJC was a part of the divine decrees.

ACT 4:27 "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,

ACT 4:28 to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.

Now, did God the Father make them do it?

Did He violate their free will and make them crucify His Son and then send them to eternal damnation?

No,

He did not, in fact, He could not, that would make Him unjust and God cannot be anything but just and righteous; DEU 32:4.

Go back to in Luk 22:21.

LUK 22:21 "But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Me on the table.

LUK 22:22 "For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"

Now the question arises,

"Did God make Judas betray TLJC, and made Herod and Pontius Pilate order His execution or did they do it on their own?"

I think that the last half of this verse answers that question, "woe to that man by whom He is betrayed."

You have heard ROM 10:17 many times;

ROM 10:17 "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

HEB 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

These two verses definitely apply to our subject on the divine decrees especially in light of last night's message.

The more you hear the word of God, the greater your faith develops.

The more your faith develops, the more power you will have to fulfill Heb 11:6, to please Him.

God knew simultaneously in eternity past everything that would ever happen in human history, every thought, every action and every decision of every creature.

And we noted that very important principle that;

We classify the decrees as being plural, but in reality, it is all one decree.

And while this subject may be complicated and detailed, it is very important for you to understand because, while it is technical, it is a reminder to you that billions and billions of years ago before man existed, God had you personally in mind.

Now, last time we closed with Point 2. There are five characteristics of the divine decrees.

I only had the chance to give you one in closing.

(A) First of all, the decrees are all comprehensive.

They are complete, entire, and whole.

They go together and fit perfectly.

This means that not the slightest uncertainty could exist as to one of the smallest or most insignificant events without everything else wrong getting confused and then there would be nothing but chaos.

As we noted LUK 12:6 "Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And yet not one of them is forgotten before God."

LUK 12:7 "Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

God is not the author of confusion; 1CO 14:33.

1CO 14:33 for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Look at DEU 32:1 "Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

DEU 32:2 "Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb.

DEU 32:3 "For I proclaim the name of the Lord; Ascribe greatness to our God!

DEU 32:4 "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.

Everything you think, why you think it, and the environment in which you think it, was all known to God in eternity past.

Now,

Although it may NOT seem to some of you that your life has been blended perfectly together by God, in heaven you will understand that it was.

No matter what you have gone through, or are going through, or will go through, God knew all about it and billions of years ago and knowing about it, He provided everything that you need to handle the problem.

It just requires faith on our part to believe it!

God is not bound to follow any necessary path.

All things are brought into being and controlled and are made subject to His divine pleasure, and result in His eternal glory.

And that's why we have such passages as ISA 43:7.

ISA 43:7 Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

Your parents didn't make you, God did!!!

Or ISA 48:11 "For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can {My name} be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.

ISA 60:21 "Then all your people will be righteous; They will possess the land forever, however, it is the branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified.

Having decreed this, He is bound by His infinite faithfulness and truth to complete what He has begun; PHI 1:6.

PHI 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

This includes completing the work He has begun in you.

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However, it is also because of the will of God that we possess a free will.

Pro 16:4 "The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil."

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It simply means that ultimately God will be glorified either by the positive volition of His creatures or through negative volition.

ROM 11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

So, the decrees of God are the adopted and chosen plan of God for all His works.

Even the plan to crucify TLJC was a part of the divine decrees.

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ACT 4:28 to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.

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No, He did not, in fact, He could not!

That would make Him unjust and God cannot be anything but just and righteous.

Go to Luk 22:21-22.

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"Did God make Judas betray TLJC and make Herod and Pontius Pilate order His execution or did they do it on their own?"

I think that the last half of this verse answers that question, "woe to that man or that person by whom He is betrayed."

Now,

It is true that we noted in one of our definitions on the decrees that the decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass.

However,

Foreordaining something does not mean to violate human volition.

The Compact Dictionary of doctrinal words in theology foreordination is the belief that God has set all events before they happen, but not to the extent that He must destroy human freedom, an important part of being created in His image."

So, bear in mind those five characteristics as we approach all sorts of things, like the potter and the clay.

The decrees of God are;

- (1) All comprehensive
- (2) Eternal
- (3) Perfect
- (4) Unchangeable and certain.
- (5) The free choice of God in eternity past.

Look at Eph 2:10 which will look something like this when we get there in our study of Ephesians

The NAS says - EPH 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

The corrected translation will look like this;

EPH 2:10 "For we are His production [we have invisible assets, election and predestination], having been created a new spiritual species in Christ Jesus for the purpose of performing good works of intrinsic value, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

It's amazing of how the divine decrees tells us of so many of the wonderful things that God has done for us billions and billions of years ago.

What a fantastic concept of the grace of God when you think of it in billions and billions of years ago.

God actually knew that you would believe in Christ and knowing that He provided this fantastic equal privilege concept under the print-out of predestination.

"having been created in Christ Jesus for divine good works" means that we have momentum inside the PPOG as a part of equal privilege of election.

When it says;

“which God has prepared in advance,” it is a reference to the divine decree and the divine provision of our portfolio of invisible assets prepared by God in advance in eternity past for every Church-age believer.

And then finally a purpose clause....."that we should walk by means of them [referring to the utilization of our fantastic assets]."

When you stop to think that we as believers should walk by means of our invisible assets, then you will realize that it's time that you understood the doctrine of divine decrees.

Then you will understand such passages as;

ROM 6:4 "So we too might walk in newness of life".

EPH 4:1 "Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called."

And why not?

Why not walk in victory now because of what the Lord has done?

PSA 126:3 The Lord has done great things for us; We are glad.

Concerning our sins, look at ISA 44:21

ISA 44:21 "Remember these things, O Jacob, And Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant, O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me.

ISA 44:22 "I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud, And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."

ISA 44:23 Shout for joy, O heavens, for the Lord has done it! Shout joyfully, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into a shout of joy, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it; For the Lord has redeemed Jacob And in Israel He shows forth His glory.

LAM 2:17 The Lord has done what He purposed; He has accomplished His word Which He commanded from days of old.

Maybe MAR 5:19 will be a reality to some, the Lord said, "Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you."

Think of it, God knew simultaneously in eternity past everything that would ever happen in human history (every thought, every action and every decision of every creature).

How everything would relate to each other.

How every person would relate to each other.

How you were in the mind of God billions and billions of years ago, you and all of your problems, every single one of them He thought about you personally.

You say, how can he think of billions and billions of people?

He can because He lives in another dimension than we do and He is omnipresent and has omniscience and that takes faith on our part to believe it; HEB 11:6; ROM 10:17.

He can think of every one personally and He knows about every one of their problems and has a solution for every one of their problems and He does all this for EVERYONE!

MAT 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you

MAT 5:45b for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

PSA 148:6b He has made a decree which will not pass away.

Will you believe it?

Remember ROM 10:17 "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

(Y) Point 3. The five characteristics of the decrees.

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