

EVERY WOMAN'S HOPE
THE DOCTRINE OF GOD'S DECREE
Session 12 — April 19, 2023

This week we are taking the first 2 topics of 3 which could each take weeks of our study to go over thoroughly. But this is an overview of the elements of Systematic Theology and therefore we will only be scratching the surface of these weighty, yet important doctrines. The full 3 sections are as follows:

1. The Decree/Plan of God
2. The Origin of Evil
3. The Providence of God

As mentioned, we will only cover God's Decree and the Origin of Evil in Session 12.

OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SESSION

- 1) To gain a basic grasp and be able to describe the biblical teaching on the Decree (or Plan) of God.
- 2) To look at the origin of evil and how it can exist with an all-powerful and all-good God.

KEY VERSE TO MEMORIZE

“Also, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will...”

Ephesians 1:11, NASB

PART ONE THE DECREE OF GOD – HIS ETERNAL PLAN

God has a plan for this universe and all the creatures within it. This plan begins in the infinite past (also called *eternity past*) and continues into the infinite future (*eternity future*). This is a comprehensive and complete plan, designed to bring glory to God. ...This plan is referred to by theologians as “*God’s Decree.*”

- 1.** Read the following verses and identify what they say about God’s Decree:

- > Psalm 2:7
- > Psalm 148:6
- > Jeremiah 5:22
- > Isaiah 14:27
- > Daniel 4:24

- 2.** What does Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 intimate about God’s Decree?

- 3.** What do the following verses teach about the Decree of God?

- > Compare Isaiah 7:14 with Matthew 1:22
- > Compare Micah 5:2 with Matthew 2:5-6
- > Luke 22:22
- > Acts 2:23
- > Acts 17:26

4. How might we interpret the life experiences of Moses, Job, and Joseph with reference to the Decrees of God and His sovereign governing “*everything that would take place in time?*” Identify the natural calamity (nature) and moral calamity (personal suffering) in your examples.

> Exodus 2:11-15

> Genesis 41:32 & 47:13-17

> Genesis 50:20

> Job 1:15; 1:16: 1:19

* Helping you to understand:

The terms “compatibilism” and “concurrency” are used by theologians to demonstrate that divine determinism is compatible with human freedom and moral responsibility. In other words, __. God is the ultimate, often *indirect*, and *remote* cause, but secondary causes exist that are more direct and responsible from the human perspective.

5. Look at Acts 2:23 and Acts 4:27-28 and see how *ultimate* and *secondary* causes played a role in the crucifixion of Jesus. How can you say God ultimately decreed the crucifixion but at the same time He is not directly responsible for what was done to His son?

* Helping you to understand:

Decrees by God are seen as determined before time, sovereignly ordained by God for his glory and for His pleasure. This would involve not just general providence of nature and major events, but also down to meticulous detail of individual lives. This would include election to salvation.

6. What would you say is the ultimate cause behind a person’s salvation (Ephesians 1:4), yet identify a secondary cause that is more obvious to us as finite human beings (Acts 3:19 & 16:31)?
7. How can we reconcile Ephesians 1:4 with Romans 10:13? Does the *sovereignty* of God conflict with the human *responsibility* to repent and believe?
8. How can God make the following promises toward people which all require human responsibility in their response to His promises, and yet reconcile the fact that He is sovereign in salvation? Read about His promises here - Isaiah 1:18; 45:22; 55:1-3; Matt. 11:28-29; Jn. 6:35,37; Jn. 11:25-26; Jn. 3:16.
9. Read Job 38-41. Do you see God addressing Job’s suffering? If not, what does God stress in His answer to Job’s suffering? Why do you think He does that?

PART 2 THE PROBLEM OF EVIL – THE CREATION & FALL OF THE ANGELIC RACE

10. Where did evil come from if God said in Genesis 1:31 that everything He had created was very good, yet in Genesis 3:1 He tells us about a serpent that is evil and tempts the first couple to sin?

- 11.** In Isaiah 14:1-15 & Ezekiel 28:11-17, what is the source of the evil identified in those texts?

- 12.** God could not have created anything as infinitely perfect as He is because Scripture states that He alone is infinitely perfect in all His ways. Would this fact allow for the potential of evil coming from a creation that was less than perfect as God is perfect? Discuss this idea....