

## DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREE(S)

### I. Introduction.

- A. Webster defines the term decree as an official order or decision, as of a government; anything settled and unchangeable; to order, decide or appoint by decree.
- B. As it is used in relation to God, any decree issued forth from His Person is Divine in nature and subject to His essence and attributes.
- C. When we speak of the Divine decrees, we must first recognize that there is actually only one decree in view (Psa.148:6) denoting He had only one eternal purpose that is expressed in the many facets of His plan.
- D. In the singular, God's Divine decree is the totality of the plan of God to come into existence by His demand and accomplished according to its purpose.
- E. We, because of the limitations of our mentality and faculties, perceive the contents of this one eternal purpose in a partial manner both logically and chronologically as the various aspects of God's plan are revealed in time.
- F. Therefore, it is proper for us to speak of the single decree in terms of the plural aspects of it, though the eternal purpose was decreed in eternity past and made instantaneously.
- G. The Divine decree is the effect of His Sovereignty in which God's "will/volition (qel hma – thelema)" determined in eternity past for His plan to exist and become reality. Cp.Rev.4:11

### II. Vocabulary.

- A. There is not a specific vocabulary term or phrase for the Divine decrees, but a number of Hebrew and Greek words are used to denote God's sovereign purposes in eternity past.
- B. These terms are used to express the reality that God's volition was operative before anything existed, choosing and making decisions with respect to what would constitute the future.
- C. This list is not designed to be comprehensive, but only to indicate that God is clearly viewed as planning and making decisions in eternity past according to His own sovereign volition.
- D. Hebrew vocabulary.
  - 1. ~מז" – zamam; 14X, verb; found only in the Qal stem; to consider, intend or purpose something; when used of God it is generally used of the Lord carrying out His purposes in judgment. Lam.2:17
  - 2. חמזח- m<sup>e</sup>zimmah; 19X, f.s.n; purpose, what one aims, intends, or desires to occur. Jer.23:20
  - 3. # [י" –ya'ats; verb, 80X; to plan, give counsel or advice, to deliberate, purpose, or make a determination. Isa.14:24,26,27
  - 4. חצ' – etsah; f.s.n; counsel, advice, or purpose. Isa.5:19; 19:17
  - 5. בַּחַשׁ – chashabh; verb; plan, imagine; the idea of this verb is to employ the mind in thinking activity, focusing not so much on understanding something, but on the creating of new ideas. Gen.50:20; Jer.18:8

- E. Greek vocabulary.
  1. protiqhmi – protithemi; 3X, verb; used only in the middle voice; lit. to set before oneself, to intend, purpose, or plan.
  2. proqesij – prothesis; 12X, f.s.n; lit. a setting before, but secondarily refers to that which is purposed or planned. Rom.8:28
  3. boulh, - boule; 12X, f.s.n; an inward thought process leading toward a decision, the decision, purpose, or plan. Luk.7:30; Eph.1:11
- F. These words are representative of the fact that God had a considered course of action, which He has executed throughout angelic and human history. Act.2:23
- G. Further, they do not include the various terms that relate to time that indicate that God’s decrees and choices occurred in eternity past, prior to any creation. Mic.5:2; Eph.1:4; 2Tim.1:9

### III. Characteristics of the decree(s).

- A. The decree of God is His eternal (it always existed with Him), holy (righteous and just), wise (having all the facts), immutable (it cannot change or be changed) and sovereign purpose, which simultaneously comprehends all things that ever were or will be.
- B. God did not decree His own existence; God existed prior to the decrees, so they do not act upon God, He acts upon the decrees.
- C. Since we are creatures of time and logic (the normal human mind should think logically and according to chronological progression) we can only perceive the various aspects of the one giant decree in stages, although the decrees were all given simultaneously in eternity past.
- D. The Divine decrees are God’s eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of all creatures and events, and this includes the precise manner and order of their occurrence.
- E. God determined of His own will that all that exists would exist, thus making certain that all the events of the universe would occur, including angelic and human history—past, present, and future.
- F. The Divine decrees have five definite characteristics.
  1. The decrees are entirely comprehensive; this means that there is not the slightest uncertainty as to one of the smallest or most insignificant events without throwing the entire plan of God into confusion. Everything we think, why we think it, the environment in which we think it, as well as all the causes and effects that stem from that thinking were all known to God in eternity past. Mat.10:29-30
  2. The decrees are eternal; since God is perfect, He does not gain knowledge and always knew everything that ever was or will be in their causes (how they got there), their conditions (present status), successions (interaction with the people in your environment that leads to decisions), and relations (how everything and everyone relates to each other).
  3. The decrees are perfect; while we recognize that the perfection of the decrees stems from the perfect nature of God Himself, we further

recognize that they are not perfected by reality because they include sin, and all the horrible repercussions that stem from rebellion against God.

4. The decrees are immutable; nothing can possibly happen that would necessitate a change to the plan of God since God always knew and currently knows all things.
  5. The decrees constitute the supreme act of sovereignty in eternity past; since God is not bound to choose a particular course of action, He made these decisions of His own sovereign volition, which involved creating beings that can choose for or against the Creator.
- G.** One must make a distinction between God's eternal decree and God's laws since one is related to eternity past and one is related to time.
1. The Laws of Divine Establishment are designed to regulate human conduct; they are established for human beings to obey.
  2. The Laws of Divine Establishment are here to protect and perpetuate the human race, thus giving every human being the chance to believe on Christ and grow spiritually without interference or coercion.
  3. While men can violate God's laws in time, they cannot violate the eternal decree because any decision they make was known in eternity past and was taken into consideration in the decree.

- IV.** The purpose of the Divine decrees as related to the pleasure and glory of God.
- A.** The Divine decrees are the sovereign choice of God's will and mentality by which all things are brought into being, sustained and controlled, subjected to His pleasure, and producing His glorification. Isa.46:10
  - B.** Since the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit pre-existed all things, they formulated a plan that was designed with two distinct concepts in mind.
  - C.** One must be aware of the fact that since only these three existed, the Divine decrees truly concerned no one but them.
  - D.** The first concept has to do with the pleasure of God, which is considerably broader in scope than the limitations of pleasure with which we are familiar.
  - E.** While we do a variety of things to bring pleasure to ourselves, God's pleasure is not nearly as impulsive or frivolous as ours; nevertheless, God determined in a moment of time to create all things, and in the following order.
    1. The first wave of creation included a finite but exceedingly large company of angels, each with his own spiritual body, volition, personality, name, etc. Isa.40:26
    2. Secondly, He created billions and billions of light years of space, which is apparently still expanding according to His decree, and one particularly habitable planet.
    3. Third, He created and continues to create mankind, whose nature was similar to that of the angels but considerably inferior in many ways, to demonstrate the veracity of God's choices to those angels that had impugned His character.
      - a.** It should be evident that Satan and all his angels are no match for the power of God and could have been annihilated at any point in the proceedings.

- b. The fact that God allows a created being to malign, slander, oppose Him, and continue to exist should cause one to recognize that all beings are actually free to do as they choose.
  - F. Since God possesses absolute happiness at all times as part of His essence, it would be incorrect to think that all this activity increased His level of pleasure; it would be more accurate to say that all this proceeded from the source of His pleasure.
  - G. The second factor that must be considered in this matter is that God only acts on behalf of His perfect glory, which He reserves only for Himself. Isa 48:11
  - H. While this is an undesirable quality in created beings, the absolute integrity of the Divine essence dictates that God acts on behalf of His own glory since that is the righteous thing to do. Isa.42:8
  - I. When we speak of the glory of God, we must distinguish between His intrinsic glory and the extrinsic glory that comes to Him from those He has created.
    - 1. The glory that is inherent in His person consists of the total perfection of His attributes, which is perfect and immutable and by definition cannot change. Rev.15:8; 21:23
    - 2. Externally, God receives glory from His creatures and that glorification increases as His plan progresses. Rev.5:13
  - J. Although God has always existed in perfect glory, anything He does is designed to reflect the glory of His person and result in His further glorification. Rev.15:4
  - K. Therefore, all His actions in animate and inanimate creation are designed to further the glory of the Divine essence. Isa.43:7
  - L. It should be obvious that it is by the good pleasure of God and for His ultimate glory that angelic and human volition exist. Rev.4:11
  - M. Further, it must be stressed that God is glorified by angelic and human volition that chooses to maladjust to His plan, although He neither desires nor sanctions negative volition in any form. Psa.76:10; Eze.28:22
  - N. It is in the sharing of His glory with created beings that brings God pleasure and He will continue to reap the eternal measure of glory and pleasure that is due Him for executing His perfect plan. Rev.5:13-14.
- V. The Divine decrees are the function of God's absolute sovereignty.
- A. Generally, when we speak of the will of God, we are referring to His directive purpose for an individual or group in a particular circumstance or situation.
  - B. However, when we speak of the will of God as related to the Divine decrees we are referring to the decision He made in eternity past, generated from His attribute of sovereignty, which established that certain things would actually come into being while other things would not.
  - C. Since God alone existed He could not consult anyone, seek any advice, direction, input, or information of any kind. Isa.40:13-14
  - D. It was the attribute of sovereignty, God's free and binding choice that determined what would occur in time.

- E.** While many things that occur in time are the results of angelic or human volition acting contrary to God's desire, He nevertheless decreed that these things would be allowed to take place.
- F.** It was through God's sovereign choice that He alone decided what His creation would be; for instance, in eternity past God determined that human beings would be rational creatures with free will, comprised of a body, soul, and spirit.
- G.** Although all that exists is there by His sovereign choice, it must be noted that the nature of God is such that He always willed and provided the highest and the best for His creation.
  - 1.** One should be impressed with the nature of God's design of the material world and our material nature; our physical bodies are perfectly adapted to living in the physical universe that He created.
  - 2.** The human race is not some pet, toy, or bizarre experiment gone awry; we are His offspring and the objects of His wisdom, love, grace, faithfulness, etc. Act.17:28
- H.** Once God has made a sovereign decision to act in a particular manner or to do a particular thing, He must continue to abide by His own sovereign choice; the same sovereign will that made the decrees will also ensure their execution. Psa.138:8; Isa.9:7 ; 46:10
- I.** In that regard we may note that the decrees are all efficacious in that they determine all that was, all that is, or all that will be; however, we may view the Divine decrees from two perspectives.
  - 1.** Some of the decrees are accomplished directly by God as a sovereign act of His will, such as the creation of angels, the universe, and mankind, and these are known as the immediate aspects of His plan.
  - 2.** Some of the decrees are fulfilled because God determined to allow and employ a secondary or tertiary cause by which the actions of other agents advanced His plan and worked to carry out His predetermined plan, and these are known as the mediate aspects of His plan. Act.2:23
  - 3.** Both categories of events, the mediate and the immediate, are equally certain to occur whether they are caused directly by the sovereign act of god or caused by the free will of created beings.

**VI.** The Divine decrees as related to the attribute of omniscience.

- A.** Omniscience refers to the attribute of God by which He knows all things; He knows perfectly, eternally, and simultaneously all that is knowable, the actual as well as the possible. Mat.11:21
- B.** The omniscience of God may be divided into three categories of knowledge.
  - 1.** Self-knowledge; this indicates that God knows everything about Himself; He understands His essence and the unlimited capabilities of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.
  - 2.** Omniscience proper; this means that God knows all things outside of Himself, all things about all creatures, the actual, as well as the possible.
  - 3.** Foreknowledge; this is actually a subcategory of omniscience and deals with the fact that God knows what He has actually decreed and deals with

objective facts only. This term is only used of His dealings with Christ and believers. 1Pet.1:2

- C. While the sovereign God and His knowledge are eternal, the link between His surpassing knowledge and our inferior knowledge is Bible doctrine.
- D. In the logical progression, as we must deal with it from our human perspective, omniscience preceded all activity; God knew all possible courses of action before He actually made a decision as to which course of action to pursue.
- E. As God pondered (anthropopathically) the infinite possibilities for His creation, His perfect decision came as a result of His perfect essence and understanding of all possible courses of action and the ramifications of each.
- F. The omniscience of God has every detail of angelic and human history before Him at all times, and is therefore completely superior to our limited knowledge in time.
- G. He perceives the free as free, the necessary as necessary, together with all their causes, conditions, and relations as one indivisible system, with every link essential to the integrity of the whole.
- H. The whole of history is a series of cause and effect relationships, with every cause and effect leading to another cause and effect and so on.
- I. Therefore, although God always knew what human history would be, He determined that man's volition would be the cause of all human function; therefore, the course of history is simply as man thinks it, wills it, and does it.
- J. While omniscience knows every thought, decision, and action of history, foreknowledge is that function of omniscience that deals with what is actually going to occur, as opposed to the hypothetical or possible.
- K. Therefore, although omniscience, foreknowledge, and the decree all exist simultaneously in the mind of God, we must separate them into a logical sequence in order to understand them.
  - 1. Omniscience is first, as God considers all the possibilities (the actual and the possible) and all that would be involved if He adopted any one of an infinite number of plans of action that were available to Him.
  - 2. After determining His course of action, God decreed the facts of angelic and human history.
  - 3. Knowing these actual facts is the basis for foreknowledge, which is more limited in scope than omniscience since foreknowledge deals with actual events only.
  - 4. Therefore, the decree is based on God's omniscience, while foreknowledge is based on what has been decreed since that is what is certain to occur.

**VII.** The Divine decrees as related to angelic and human volition.

- A. While the Divine decrees are clearly the sovereign action of God in eternity past, it is clear that the free will of men and angels exist in history simultaneously alongside the sovereignty of God.
- B. This is one very important (perhaps the most important) aspect that one must grasp in order to fully appreciate the Divine decrees as they relate to volition.

- C. The Eternal God has sovereign rights and nothing can happen apart from His knowledge of it and His understanding of it.
- D. God exercised His sovereign right to choose and this choice resulted in what we call the certain futurition of all things; this means that from eternity past God decreed that the future would happen as it has and will.
- E. This does not mean that any event is directly effected or caused by the decree; the decree merely establishes what will be caused, but the decree is not the cause.
- F. Therefore, in the case of every creature that has volition, the decree itself provides for the following:
  1. The agent shall be a free agent; in effect, the Divine decree provides for the functional existence of angelic and human volition, with which God Himself will not interfere. Eze.3:27; Rev.22:11
  2. The antecedents of the agent and all antecedents of the act in question shall be what they are; this means that the entire system is one of cause and effect and once something happens, it has happened and cannot be changed. Wishful thinking does not cause God to change what has occurred.
  3. All present conditions of fact are what they are; God does not change or alter reality to accommodate our bad decisions, whether they are based on ignorance or on arrogance. He is not going to make reality suddenly vanish, reverse itself, or become anything other than what it is.
  4. All acts will be perfectly spontaneous and free from Divine coercion on the part of the agent; the cause of all your actions is your free choice, and the fact that your thoughts or actions are in the decree does not mean that the decree caused you to think them or do them.
  5. The act is future from the time of the decree; that is, it will definitely take place at a certain time after the decree is given.
- G. The obvious application of these facts to the situation of Satan and every other created being with volition is as follows:
  1. God created Satan (and all other angels and human beings) with free will and the ability to choose for or against God.
  2. God provided the environment in which Satan existed and the other creatures with which Satan interacted, producing a system of cause and effect.
  3. God, however, did not control Satan's thinking and allowed his thought process to freely express itself without constraint of any kind.
  4. Satan manufactured the sin of arrogance from his own volition, as God always knew he would, and one-third of the angels chose to follow him.
  5. Their fallen status is not the result of some arbitrary decision by God; rather it is a direct result of their own individual choices to reject God and His authority, which places them under the judgment of +R.
  6. However, while God had decreed that Satan would be created and would choose to live his life in this fashion, God did not tamper with his will and allowed him to make personal choices for which he has already been judged and will suffer the eternal consequences. Mat.25:41

- H. As we said before, man's volition is the cause of all human function; therefore, the course of history is simply as man thinks it, wills it, and does it.
- I. Since God's decrees are efficacious (they have the power to produce the intended result) there exist three distinct ways in which the sovereignty and power of God deal with volitional choices as He executes the decrees.
  1. The directive will of God (what He desires us to do in a particular circumstance) provides the preferred course of action to those that will consider it.
  2. The permissive will of God allows us to act in various ways that are incompatible with His plan, but do not ultimately hinder His plan.
  3. The overruling will of God actually stops creatures from having their way and serves to protect us, mankind as a whole, and maintain the integrity of God's plan. 2The.2:7
  4. These subcategories are designed to differentiate between the original will of God in the decree, and God's will in time, which is actually the execution of His own eternal decree.
- J. It should always be remembered that God's decree was the source of volition; no decree ever opposes the function of free will.

**VIII.** The Divine decrees as they relate to unbelievers and believers.

- A. The most serious mistake one can make when dealing with human volition and unbelievers is to suggest that the Divine decrees predestined unbelievers to go to Hell.
- B. While God was certainly cognizant that they would not believe, He is in no way the author of their unbelief but simply provided them the volitional capability to make their own decisions, which He has bound Himself to honor.
- C. As we will observe, one must be very careful to distinguish between the decrees of God and the desires of God.
  1. The decrees merely establish the facts of history, and there are many things included in history that God does not personally desire.
  2. Since God's decrees include the principle of volition, this allows His creation the opportunity to reject His will and choose that which is sinful.
  3. Although God never approves of sins, He put them in the decrees because He knew we would commit them; therefore, the facts of history include many evil things, which God does not sanction, but which exist nonetheless.
  4. God desires for angels and men to use their freedom to execute His will, but very often it is simply used to violate the desires of God. Gal.5:13
  5. While this does not please God, the very fact that sin and evil are in the decree and part of our existence is definitive proof that our volition is truly free.
  6. God does not desire to cast any of His creatures into the Lake of Fire, but it is decreed as a future reality for Satan, his angels, and all men that reject Christ. 2Pet.3:9
  7. God clearly desires for all men to be saved and come to a full knowledge of Bible doctrine, but does not decree that they will. 1Tim.2:4

- D.** In no way can one state that the Bible even suggests that God desires any of His creatures to be eternally separated from Him; however, the Bible clearly teaches that He will allow that to occur.
- E.** When relating the Divine decrees to believers, the Bible teaches such doctrines as election, foreknowledge, and predestination.
1. In a logical sequence, foreknowledge of what was decreed preceded the other two actions, all of which occurred in eternity past.
  2. While God knew who would believe, He did not make them believe against their will as suggested by Martin Luther in his work, *The Bondage of the Will*, in which he says, “*It is a settled truth, then, even on the basis of your own testimony, that we do everything of necessity, and nothing by free-will; for the power of free-will is nil, and it does no good, nor can do, without grace. It follows, therefore, that free-will is obviously a term applicable only to Divine Majesty; for only He can do, and does whatever he wills in heaven and earth. Psa.135:6 If free will is ascribed to men, it is ascribed with no more propriety than divinity itself would be - and no blasphemy could exceed that! So it befits theologians to refrain from using the term when they want to speak of human ability, and to leave it to be applied to God only.*”
  3. After God knew who would believe through omniscience, He decreed that it would be so, and *elected/selected/chose* each person.
  4. In other words, God knew ahead of time that, if given free will, they would freely choose to believe in Christ; second, He decreed that such an act of faith would actually occur; third, His election put a stamp of approval on His own foreknowledge. 1Pet.1:1c-2
  5. Since He knew that these believers were certainly going to “be on His team”, He marked them out to a particular destiny as seen in the doctrine of predestination. Rom.8:29-30; Eph.1:5,11
  6. While the functions of omniscience, foreknowledge, election, and predestination occurred in eternity past, these choices guaranteed the execution of all future aspects that are necessary to fulfill them. Rom.8:30
    - a. This includes the fact that we would hear the gospel in time as seen in our calling.
    - b. It includes the imputation of +R, which qualifies us for the imputation of eternal life.
    - c. It also includes the resurrection of the body, which is necessary for our ultimate glorification.
  7. God also recognized the historical reality of each person’s level of spiritual growth under His plan of grace.
    - a. The extent of your positive volition was known in eternity past and God planned certain blessings in time and eternity for those that would make the decision to maximize under Bible doctrine and the application of it. Luk.8:15; 19:17
    - b. This is the method by which God glorifies Himself and provides for His own pleasure.

- IX.** Specific items that God has decreed.
- A.** Angelic creation. Heb.1:7
  - B.** Physical creation. Psalms 148:6
  - C.** The creation of mankind. Gen.1:26-27
  - D.** Every aspect of the career of His Son. Psalms 2:7
    - 1. His birth. Mic.5:2; Mat.1:22-23
    - 2. His life. Isa.53:2-4
    - 3. His manner of death and burial. Isa.53:4-5,7-9
    - 4. His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation. Rom.1:4; Eph.4:8-10; Act.2:33
    - 5. The summing up of all things in Christ. Eph.1:10
  - E.** The salvation of positive volition. Rom.8:29-30
  - F.** The reality of grace, by which God administers His plan. 2Tim.1:9
  - G.** Temporal and eternal judgment on negative volition.
    - 1. Temporal judgment. Job 20:5-29
    - 2. Eternal judgment. Psalms 9:5; 2Pet.2:3; Rev.20:10
  - H.** Divine discipline on Israel. Isa.10:23
  - I.** Daniel's 70 weeks. Dan.9:24
  - J.** The appearance and success of Antichrist. Dan.11:36
  - K.** The destructions of Daniel's 70th week. Dan.9:27
- X.** Applications and misapplications of this doctrine.
- A.** The first practical application of this doctrine is that the Divine decree is the sum total of God's plan and must inevitably center around Jesus Christ as the executor of the plan. Col.1:18
  - B.** Therefore, the volitional freedom of mankind must face the issue of Jesus Christ, Who He is and what He has done on the cross, and make a determination with respect to His person and work.
  - C.** The cross is the place where the sovereignty of God determined to meet the free will of man and reconcile all differences. Eph.2:16; Col.1:20
  - D.** Under the decree of grace, God accomplishes the work of salvation while mankind is allowed to reap the benefits apart from human merit. Eph.2:8-9
  - E.** Once one has believed, he is subject to the reality that *God Himself determined to cause all things to work together for/into good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* Rom.8:28
    - 1. This passage clearly indicates that the eternal purposes of God for each believer cannot be thwarted by external events, no matter how good or bad they may be.
    - 2. God's purposes for each believer were determined in eternity past and He has taken everything into consideration with respect to each of us. 2Tim.1:9
    - 3. While this does not mean that only "good" things will happen to us in our lifetime, it does mean that we can relate all events to the sovereign purpose of God, rather than to chance, bad luck, etc.
    - 4. When God allows people to act contrary to our best interests it does not mean that He is acting contrary to our best interests; it does mean that He

can use the “bad” experiences of life to advance His plan for us, help us grow, and bless us.

5. Therefore, God’s eternal plan does not violate volition but was designed to include direction, provision, preservation, choice, and the related causes and effects.
- F.** One major area of misapplication of this doctrine is found in those that suggest or teach that God decreed the reprobation of any creature, human or angelic.
1. The language of decrees, foreknowledge, election, and predestination is never used of unbelievers and cannot be assumed to be a function of God in eternity past.
  2. Many false teachers assume precisely that and their argument states that *“God did, from all eternity, decree to leave some of Adam's fallen posterity in their sins, and to exclude them from Christ and His benefits...The non-elect were predestinated, not only to continue in final impenitency, sin and unbelief, but were likewise, for such their sins, righteously appointed to infernal death hereafter.”*
  3. They make these assertions without one verse of scriptural documentation and attribute to God what is simply the result of human and angelic volition; they attempt to make it God’s choice simply because He allowed it.
  4. The fact that God allowed volition to choose against Him does not make Him the author or cause of their choice; it merely proves that free will is free will.
  5. Therefore, it is entirely incorrect to presume that God decreed anything for those that choose not to believe, except their right to exist and make the free choices that would ultimately determine their destiny.
  6. Further, God may use their free choices as part of His decree, knowing that they would certainly perform them of their own volition. Act.2:23; Rom.9:17
- G.** Another issue involves the two extremes that are seen in the doctrines of Calvinism and Arminianism, both of which lead to false doctrine.
1. Calvinism (John Calvin 1509-1564) distorts the sovereignty of God to the point that it tends to exclude the principle of free will by attributing angelic and human actions to God’s decree (foreordination) and not to volitional choices.
  2. Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) and his followers distort the sovereignty of God in the opposite direction and claim that man’s volition is beyond God’s control and that man can cause things that are not in the divine decrees.
  3. These two views are often set in opposition to each other, as though they were mutually contradictory rather than complimentary; both realities are clearly observed in the Bible, which cannot contradict itself. Rom.9:11; Rev.13:16
- H.** The Divine decrees are not designed to cause a fatalistic view of life that supposes that God has fixed our actions and that we actually have no choice.

1. Webster defines fatalism as *“The doctrine that all things are subject to fate, or that their occurrence is necessitated by the nature of things or by the fixed and inevitable decree of those that determine destiny—the fates”*.
  2. Any assumption that our actions do not have immediate consequences for us, as well as more far-reaching consequences in the chain of cause and effect, is to be rejected.
  3. Further, any assumption that our actions were determined by God and are not the result of our free choices is equally fallacious.
- I. The doctrine of the Divine decrees is necessary so the believer can understand that God’s plan for His life preceded him to eternity past and has taken all things into consideration.

*“O Lord, You are my God; I will exalt you, I will  
Give thanks to Your name; for You have worked  
Wonders, planned formed long ago, with perfect  
Faithfulness.”  
Isa.25:1*

*“Many, O lord my God, are the wonders which  
You have done, and Your thoughts toward us;  
There is non to compare with You; if I would declare and  
Speak them they would be too numerous to count.”  
Psa.40:5*

*“also we have obtained an inheritance, having been  
Predestined according to His purpose who works all  
Things after the counsel of His will.”  
Eph.1:11*