

Chapter 3. Of God's Decree

1. From Eternity, God Decreed Everything that Happens

From eternity, God, with perfect wisdom and by his own free will, decreed everything that happens. **1** At the same time, God is not the author of sin and does not have fellowship with anyone in their sin. **2** God does not violate the will of the creature; furthermore, there still exists secondary causes, which have liberty and make real decisions (contingency). Rather, God's decree establishes these things. **3** God's decree demonstrates his wisdom in directing everything and his power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree. **4**

1. [Isaiah 46:10](#); [Ephesians 1:11](#); [Hebrews 6:17](#); [Romans 9:15, 18](#)

2. [James 1:13](#); [1 John 1:5](#)

3. [Acts 4:27, 28](#); [John 19:11](#)

4. [Numbers 23:19](#); [Ephesians 1:3-5](#)

2. God Knows Everything, and His Knowledge Is Not Based Upon Passive Foreknowledge

God knows everything that could possibly happen. **5** It should be recognized that God did not decree anything because he foresaw it in the future or foresaw that it would happen. **6**

5. [Acts 15:18](#)

6. [Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18](#)

3. God Predestines Some for Salvation and Leaves Some in Their Sin

God has decreed, to demonstrate his glory, to predestine (or foreordain) some men and angels to eternal life through Jesus Christ, [7](#) to the praise of His glorious grace. [8](#) God leaves others to live in their sin, which results in their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice. [9](#)

[7.](#) [1 Timothy 5:21; Matthew 25:34](#)

[8.](#) [Ephesians 1:5-6](#)

[9.](#) [Romans 9:22-23; Jude 4](#)

4. God's Predestination Is Individual and Unchangeable

The angels and men God has predestined and foreordained are individually and unchangeably chosen, and the number of the predestined is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or decreased. [10](#)

[10.](#) [2 Timothy 2:19; John 13:18](#)

5. Predestination Is Unconditional

Those who are predestined to life were chosen by God before the foundation of the world. He chose them according to his eternal and unchanging purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will. He chose them in Christ for eternal glory merely because of his free grace and love. [11](#) Nothing in the creature was a condition or cause for God's predestination. [12](#)

[11.](#) [Ephesians 1:4, 9, 11; Romans 8:30; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9](#)

[12.](#) [Romans 9:13, 16; Ephesians 2:5, 12](#)

6. God Saves the Elect Through Means

By his eternal and completely free purpose of his will, God has both appointed the elect to glory and foreordained all the means through which they will be saved. [13](#) The elect, who are fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ [14](#) and are effectually called to faith in Christ by his Spirit working at the appropriate time. The elect are justified, adopted, sanctified, [15](#) and kept by his power through faith to salvation. [16](#) The elect are the only people who are redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved. [17](#)

[13.](#) [1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13](#)

[14.](#) [1 Thessalonians 5:9-10](#)

[15.](#) [Romans 8:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13](#)

[16.](#) [1 Peter 1:5](#)

[17.](#) [John 10:26, 17:9, 6:64](#)

7. The Elect Can Have Assurance of Salvation

The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination should be handled with special caution and care, so that people who seek and obey the will of God revealed in his word can have assurance of their eternal election from being sure of their effectual calling. [18](#) If this is done, this doctrine will result in reasons for praise, [19](#) reverence, and admiration of God, as well as humility, [20](#) diligence, and abundant comfort to everyone who sincerely obeys the gospel. [21](#)

[18.](#) [1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; 2 Peter 1:10](#)

[19.](#) [Ephesians 1:6; Romans 11:33](#)

[20.](#) [Romans 11:5-6, 20](#)

[21.](#) [Luke 10:20](#)

