

GraceLife Church Presents . . .

Soteriology

The Purpose,
Accomplishment, Plan, and
Application of Redemption

The Purpose of Redemption

To Glorify God

- ❖ Salvation has been designed by the wisdom of God to manifest his attributes to his creation.
- ❖ To show God as weighty majestic, and praiseworthy.

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Soteriology

The Purpose,
Accomplishment, Plan, and
Application of Redemption

The Accomplishment of Redemption

Penal Substitutionary Atonement

- ❖ Obedience (Active and Passive)
- ❖ Sacrifice
- ❖ Propitiation
- ❖ Redemption / Ransom
- ❖ Reconciliation
- ❖ Conquest

- ❖ The Extent of the Atonement

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Soteriology

The Purpose,
Accomplishment, Plan, and
Application of Redemption

The Plan of Redemption

The Plan of Redemption

Introduction

- ❖ The Doctrine of Election
 - ❖ Primarily viewed in Scripture as the work of God the Father.
 - ❖ A subset of the doctrine of providence—God's sovereign control of all things.
 - ❖ Providence flows from the decree of God.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

- ❖ Definition
- ❖ 5 Characteristics of God's Decree
 - ❖ Eternal
 - ❖ Unconditional
 - ❖ Immutable
 - ❖ Exhaustive
 - ❖ Compatible

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

The Definition

“The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.”

Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 7 ‘What are the Decrees of God?’

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

The Definition

“God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.”

The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter III, Section 1.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

The Definition

- ❖ The decree of God is his eternal plan by which he has rendered certain all the events of the universe, past, present, and future.
- ❖ Providence is the working out of this decree in time.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

The Definition

- ❖ Scripture usually presents the decree of God as a single decree rather than multiple decrees.
- ❖ We speak of decrees because of the many things contained in that singular decree (the entire history of the world from creation to consummation).
- ❖ This decree includes all things including his decree to save (election)

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

The Definition

- ❖ Scripture uses a number of terms to describe what theologians have summarized as God's decree.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

The Terms

Ps 2:7 “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to Me, ‘You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

The Terms

Ps 148:4 Praise Him, highest heavens,

And the waters that are above the heavens!

Ps 148:5 Let them praise the name of the LORD,

For He commanded and they were created.

Ps 148:6 He has also established them forever and ever;

He has made a decree which will not pass away.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

The Terms

Isa 5:19 Who say, “Let Him make speed, let Him hasten His work,
that we may see *it*;
And let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near
And come to pass, that we may know *it!*”

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The Decree of God

The Terms

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';

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

The Terms

Rom 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

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The Decree of God

The Terms

Eph 1:5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

Eph 1:9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

Eph 1:11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

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The Decree of God

The Terms

2 Tim 1:9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

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The Decree of God

The Terms

Heb 6:17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath

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The Decree of God

The Terms

Acts 2:23 this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

Acts 4:28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

The Terms

Ps 33:11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
The plans of His heart from generation to generation.

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The Decree of God

The Terms

Ps 135:6 Whatever the LORD pleases, He does,
In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

The Terms

- ❖ This decree is called. . .
 - ❖ The decree, a decree,
 - ❖ My purpose, his purpose, his own purpose,
 - ❖ Your hand and your purpose,
 - ❖ My good pleasure,
 - ❖ Whatever the LORD pleases,
 - ❖ The kind intension of his will; The mystery of his will,
 - ❖ The counsel of his will; The counsel of the Lord
 - ❖ The predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God
 - ❖ Your hand and purpose

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

The Terms

- ❖ God's decree is like a blueprint for everything that comes to pass in time.
- ❖ God does not create this blueprint on the fly as the events of history unfold.
- ❖ Rather, he created this blueprint in eternity past before the creation of time.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

An Eternal Decree

- ❖ God's decree occurs *before* the creation of time and is therefore said to be eternal.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

An Eternal Decree

Ps 139:16 Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Your book were all written
The days that were ordained *for me*,
When as yet there was not one of them.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

An Eternal Decree

Eph 3:9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; **10** so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*. **Eph 3:11** *This was* in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,

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The Decree of God

An Eternal Decree

2 Tim 1:9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

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The Decree of God

An Eternal Decree

Eph 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

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The Decree of God

An Eternal Decree

“Thus, all of God’s providential actions in time conform to a fixed purpose that precedes time.”

John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 490.

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The Decree of God

An Unconditional Decree

- ❖ Because nothing existed when God made his decree nothing external to God influenced his decision(s).
- ❖ Thus God's decree is unconditional, there are no conditions on it.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

An Unconditional Decree

“That is to say, because the eternal, self-existent triune God was the only entity present in eternity past (Isa 43:10; 44:24), it is impossible that anything external to God moved him to decree one thing as opposed to another, for there *was* nothing external to him (Gen 1:1; John 1:1–3).”

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The Decree of God

An Unconditional Decree

- ❖ Sometimes people say that God's decisions are based on his foreknowledge of future events.
- ❖ Jonathan Edwards argues that the foreknowledge of God necessarily requires a decree. If God knows the future it must be because he made that future certain by his decree.
- ❖ If the future is certain for any reason other than God, then those future things must have preceded God and he would not be able to change them.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

An Unconditional Decree

“But if you say, that the ground or reason of their futurity is in the things themselves, then things are future prior to any decree, or their futurity is antecedent in nature of any decree of God. And then, to what purpose is any decree of God? For, according to this supposition, God’s decreeing does not make any thing future, or not future; because it was future prior to his decree. His decreeing or appointing that any thing shall be, or shall not be, does not alter the case. It is not about to be, or about not to be, any thing the more for God’s decreeing it. According to this supposition, God has no freedom or choice in decreeing or appointing any thing. It is not at his choice what shall be future, and what not; no, not in one thing.”

Jonathan Edwards, “Concerning the Divine Decree,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:532.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

An Unconditional Decree

“For the futuration of things is by this supposition antecedent in nature to his choice; so that his choosing or refusing does not alter the case. The things in themselves are future, and his decreeing cannot make them not future; for they cannot be future and not future at the same time; neither can it make them future, because they are future already: so that they who thus plead for man’s liberty, advance principles which destroy the freedom of God himself.

It is allowed that things are future before they come to pass; because God foreknows them. Either things are future antecedently to God’s decree and independently of it, or they are not. If they are not future antecedently to, and independently of, God’s decree, then they are made so by his decree; there is no medium.”

Jonathan Edwards, “Concerning the Divine Decree,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:532.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

An Unconditional Decree

Ps 115:3 But our God is in the heavens;
He does whatever He pleases.

Ps 135:6 Whatever the LORD pleases, He does,
In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

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The Decree of God

An Unconditional Decree

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';

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The Decree of God

An Unconditional Decree

Dan 4:35 “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven
And *among* the inhabitants of earth;
And no one can ward off His hand
Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

An Immutable Decree

- ❖ God's Decree made before the foundation of the world will be carried out in time.
- ❖ Nothing whatsoever can thwart, frustrate, or otherwise change God's plan.
- ❖ God's purpose was decided according to his infinite knowledge, wisdom, and power.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

An Immutable Decree

Isa 46:8 “Remember this, and be assured; recall it to mind, you transgressors. 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, 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’; 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.”

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

An Immutable Decree

Isa 14:27 “For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate *it*? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?”

Job 42:2 “I know that You can do all things,
And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.”

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The Decree of God

An Immutable Decree

Dan 4:35 “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven
And *among* the inhabitants of earth;
And no one can ward off His hand
Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

An Immutable Decree

Ps 33:10 The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations;
He frustrates the plans of the peoples.

Ps 33:11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
The plans of His heart from generation to generation.

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The Decree of God

An Exhaustive Decree

Rom 8:28 . . . God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

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The Decree of God

An Exhaustive Decree

Eph 1:11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

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The Decree of God

An Exhaustive Decree

Job 37:12 “It changes direction, turning around by His guidance,
That it may do whatever He commands it
On the face of the inhabited earth.

Job 37:13 “Whether for correction, or for His world,
Or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen.

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The Decree of God

An Exhaustive Decree

Lam 3:37 Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass,
Unless the Lord has commanded *it*?

Lam 3:38 *Is it* not from the mouth of the Most High
That both good and ill go forth?

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The Decree of God

An Exhaustive Decree

Job 23:13 “But He is unique and who can turn Him?
And *what* His soul desires, that He does.

Job 23:14 “For He performs what is appointed for me,
And many such *decrees* are with Him.

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The Decree of God

An Exhaustive Decree

Prov 21:1 The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the LORD;
He turns it wherever He wishes.

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The Decree of God

An Exhaustive Decree

“God causes the sun—which Jesus calls *his* sun—to shine both on the just and the unjust (Matt 5:45), which in turn causes the grass to grow and brings forth produce from the earth (Ps 104:14). He determines the boundaries of nations (Acts 17:26) and rules over them (Ps 22:28), removing and setting up kings (Dan 2:21) and even turning their hearts wherever he wishes (Prov 21:1). That God turns their hearts indicates that he ordains even the desires and free choices of men, whether for good (Eph 2:10) or for evil (Gen 45:5–8; 50:20; 1 Sam 2:25; 2 Sam 24:1; Isa 10:1–8; Acts 2:23; 4:27–28).”

John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 491.

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The Decree of God

An Exhaustive Decree

Rom 11:36 For from [ἐξ] Him and through [διὰ] Him and to [εἰς] Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

An Exhaustive Decree

“Whether ends, means, contingencies, choices, or even the good and evil actions of men, nothing escapes the providential governance of God’s decree.”

John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 491.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

- ❖ If God is providentially in control of all things (as we have seen), then how can God do that and not be author of evil?
- ❖ Scripture answers that although God is the ultimate cause of all things, he is not the chargeable cause of evil.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

- ❖ God ordains the evil choices of free moral agents but he never coerces them.
- ❖ God only ordains evil for good, even while men and demons intend those same actions for contrary purposes.
- ❖ This understanding (theodicy) is sometimes called compatibilism.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

Gen 45:5 “Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. **6** “For the famine *has been* in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. **7** “God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. **8** “Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Gen 50:20 “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

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The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

“God can bring such good out of that, which in itself is contrary to his nature, and which, in itself considered, he abhors, as may be very agreeable to his nature, and when sin is spoken of as contrary to the will of God, it is contrary to his will, considered only as in itself. As man commits it, it is contrary to God’s will; for men act in committing it with a view to that which is evil. But as God permits it, it is not contrary to God’s will; for God in permitting it has respect to the great good that he will make it an occasion of.”

Jonathan Edwards, “Concerning the Divine Decree,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:529.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

“To give an instance—The crucifying of Christ was a great sin; and as man committed it, it was exceedingly hateful and highly provoking to God. Yet upon many great considerations it was the will of God that it should be done. Will any body say that it was not the will of God that Christ should be crucified? Acts 4:29 “For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

Jonathan Edwards, “Concerning the Divine Decree,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:529.

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The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

Acts 4:27 “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **28** to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

Acts 2:23 this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. . . **36** “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified.”

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

Acts 4:27 “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **28** to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

Acts 2:23 this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. . . **36** “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified.”

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A Compatible Decree

“It may be observed first of all that God is the *Ultimate* cause of the crucifixion, having predestined every circumstance that led to its occurrence and thus rendering it certain. Second, the Jews were a *proximate* cause, having incited the Romans to crucify Christ. Third, Herod, Pilate, and other godless men were the *efficient* cause because the crucifixion was carried out by Roman authority.”

John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 492.

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The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

“The Bible certainly does not proceed on the assumption that the divine decree is inconsistent with the free agency of man. It clearly reveals that God has decreed the free acts of man, but also that the actors are none the less free and therefore responsible for their acts Gen 50:19–20; Acts 2:23; 4:27–28. . . . There is not a single indication in Scripture that the inspired writers are conscious of a contradiction in connection with these matters.”

Louis Berkof, *Systematic Theology*, 106.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

“That we should say, that God has decreed every action of men, yea, every action that is sinful, and every circumstance of those actions; that he predetermines that they shall be in every respect as they afterwards are; that he determines that there shall be such actions, and just so sinful as they are; and yet that God does not decree the actions that are sinful, as sin, but decrees them as good, is really consistent.”

Jonathan Edwards, “Concerning the Divine Decree,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:527.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

“For we do not mean by decreeing an action *as sinful*, the same as decreeing an action so that it shall be sinful; but by decreeing an action *as sinful*, I mean decreeing it for the sake of the sinfulness of the action. God decrees that they shall be sinful, for the sake of the good that he causes to arise from the sinfulness thereof; whereas man decrees them for the sake of the evil that is in them.”

Jonathan Edwards, “Concerning the Divine Decree,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:527.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

“It is a proper and excellent thing for infinite glory to shine forth; and for the same reason, it is proper that the shining for of God’s glory should be complete; that is, that all parts of his glory should shine forth, that every beauty should be proportionately effulgent, that the beholder may have a proper notion of God.”

Jonathan Edwards, “Concerning the Divine Decree,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:528.

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

“This it is necessary for God’s awful majesty, his authority and dreadful greatness, justice, holiness, should be manifested. But this could not be, unless sin and punishment had been decreed; so that the shining forth of God’s glory would be very imperfect, both because these parts of divine glory would not shine forth as the other do, and also the glory of his goodness, love, and holiness would be faint without them; nay, they could scarcely shine forth at all.”

Jonathan Edwards, “Concerning the Divine Decree,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:528.

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The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

“So evil is necessary, in order to the highest happiness of the creature, and the completeness of that communication of God, for which he made the world; because the creature’s happiness consists in the knowledge of God, and sense of his love. And if the knowledge of him be imperfect, the happiness of the creature must be proportionably imperfect; and the happiness of the creature would be imperfect upon another account also; for, as we have said, the sense of good is comparatively dull and flat, without the knowledge of evil.”

Jonathan Edwards, “Concerning the Divine Decree,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:528.

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The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

- Isa 10:1** Woe to those who enact evil statutes
And to those who constantly record unjust decisions,
- Isa 10:2** So as to deprive the needy of justice
And rob the poor of My people of *their* rights,
So that widows may be their spoil
And that they may plunder the orphans.
- Isa 10:3** Now what will you do in the day of punishment,
And in the devastation which will come from afar?
To whom will you flee for help?
And where will you leave your wealth?
- Isa 10:4** Nothing *remains* but to crouch among the captives
Or fall among the slain.
In *spite of* all this, His anger does not turn away
And His hand is still stretched out.

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The Decree of God

A Compatible Decree

Isa 10:5 Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger
And the staff in whose hands is My indignation,

Isa 10:6 I send it against a godless nation
And commission it against the people of My fury
To capture booty and to seize plunder,
And to trample them down like mud in the streets.

Isa 10:7 Yet it does not so intend,
Nor does it plan so in its heart,
But rather it is its purpose to destroy
And to cut off many nations.

Isa 10:8 For it says, “Are not my princes all kings?”

The Plan of Redemption

The Decree of God

Conclusion

- ❖ The Decree of God is sometimes referred to as *predestination* since God predetermines all things.
- ❖ Predestination it is often used more narrowly to refer to God's decree of salvation.
- ❖ In that sense *predestination* refers to the doctrines of election and reprobation.

