

**THERE ARE INSTANCES WHERE GOD DECREES WHAT HE DOES NOT DESIRE
AND GOD DESIRES WHAT HE HAS NOT DECREED.**

This is *holy* ground. We must go no further than where the Word of God leads. We must not allow human logic and speculations to intrude. We must rely solely on the Word of God --- our final authority in faith and practice.

The Decree of God

God has a decree. It covers all things and all events. It cannot be resisted. It shall surely accomplish all its purposes. Consider the following passages of Scripture, if you have any doubts:

- **Ephesians 1:11** ~ *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.*
- **Daniel 4:35** ~ *All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, "What have You done?"*
- **Psalms 115:3** ~ *But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.*

This is sometimes called God's decretive will or God's secret and sovereign will. Our 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith affirms this belief in crystal clear words: *God hath decreed in Himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass.* (Chapter 3, paragraph 1)

God Decrees What He Does Not Desire

Consider:

- **Luke 22:22** ~ *And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"*
- **Acts 2:23** ~ *Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.*
- **Acts 4:27-28** ~ *"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of*

Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

Evil deeds (treachery, bribery, lies, injustice, jealousy, murder) were involved in the crucifixion of Jesus. Does God desire these evil deeds? Does it please Him to see them done? Most definitely not!! Yet He has decreed that the Saviour would be betrayed, would be taken by lawless hands and be put to death, that Herod and Pilate and the Gentiles and the Jews would act with injustice and kill Him. He decreed what He does not desire. He decreed sinful acts.

Let me hasten to add that God is not the author of sin, though He has decreed it. The people who did those evil deeds willingly are fully responsible. We come face-face with parallel truths once more. Our Confession is clear: *Yet so as thereby God is neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established; in which appears His wisdom in disposing all things and power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree.* (Chapter 3, paragraph 1)

I cannot fully understand how God can decree what He does not desire. I don't fully comprehend how God can decree sinful acts yet not be the author of sin. But I can and do see that the Bible teaches both clearly. So should I follow my human understanding or submit to God's Word? *What do you say?*

God Desires What He Has Not Decreed

Consider:

- (1) **Deuteronomy 5:28-29** ~ *"Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!*

God desires Israel to fear Him and keep all His commandments always. He says that if they do that, it shall be well with them and their children forever. But we know that it wasn't well with Israel forever! In 586 BC,

Israel was defeated by the Babylonians and went into exile. The Bible is clear concerning the reason for this defeat and exile – their disobedience!

Is their defeat and exile decreed by God? Yes, for God decrees all things and all events that come to pass. This would also mean that God has not decreed that they would fear Him and obey Him always. If He has, then surely they would! Now note that here in **Deuteronomy 5:29**, God states that He desires that they would! *Oh that they had such a heart in them . . .* He desires what He has not decreed.

- (2) **Psalm 81:13-14** ~ *Oh, that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways! I would soon subdue their enemies, and turn My hand against their adversaries.*

We see the same thing again: *If Israel listen to God and walk in His ways, then God will give them victory over their enemies.* Note the argument here – *if X, then Y.* X is the condition for Y to happen. Did X take place? **Verses 11-12** give us the answer: *But My people would not heed My voice, and Israel would have none of Me. So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, to walk in their own counsels.* **Verses 11-12** tell us what *actually* happened. This is what God has decreed for all that God decreed will come to pass. **Verses 13-14** tell us what God *desires*. It is clear that God desired something He has not decreed, for if He had decreed, it would have come to pass!

- (3) **Isaiah 48:18** ~ *Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.* The same pattern and message is repeated. God desires what He has not decreed!

I admit that I do not fully understand this. But my understanding is not my final authority. God's Word is! If the Bible indeed teaches that there are instances where God desires what He has not decreed, then I must humbly it as God's truth! And where I cannot understand, there I must bow in worship and say with the apostle Paul: *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*

This I seek to do. So God help me!

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