

“God’s Decree”

Summary

As we reflect on the Christmas story and its relevance to our lives today, we're reminded of the powerful contrast between earthly decrees and heavenly declarations. Luke 2:1 sets the stage, describing Caesar Augustus' decree for a census. Yet, in that same moment, God was orchestrating a far greater plan - the birth of our Savior. This parallel reminds us that even now, as worldly powers seem to dominate, God's eternal purposes are unfolding. We're called to choose which decree we'll live by - the world's or heaven's. Like Mary and Joseph, who responded to both earthly and divine calls, we too must be ready to move when God speaks. This may require sacrifice and discomfort, but it aligns us with God's grand design for our generation. As we enter this new year, let's tune our hearts to heaven's frequency, ready to declare and live out God's decrees in our lives and communities.

Chapters

Chapter 1 - 0:00 - 15:00: God's Timing and Purpose for Our Generation
Every generation has a God-ordained purpose and an adversary trying to overthrow it.

Chapter 2 - 15:00 - 30:00: Choosing Heaven's Decree Over Earthly Commands
We must choose to live by heaven's decree rather than earthly commands.

Chapter 3 - 30:00 - 45:00: Preparing for Divine Intervention and Personal Growth
We are entering a season of divine intervention and personal spiritual growth.

Main Points – God's Decree

Title: Answering Heaven's Decree: Our Generation's Divine Purpose

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the concept of divine decrees and their relevance to our current generation. Pastor Rob emphasizes that each generation has a God-ordained purpose and an adversary working against it. He draws parallels between the Christmas story and our present time, highlighting the importance of recognizing and responding to God's decrees for our lives. The message encourages believers to choose heaven's narrative over earthly decrees and to actively participate in fulfilling God's purposes for this generation.

Key Points:

- Every generation has a God-given mandate and a corresponding adversary
- We are living in a prophetic time of transition and must choose which decree to follow
- God's favor is upon this generation, similar to Mary in the Christmas story
- Believers are called to "declare the decree" and align with heaven's timeline
- Responding to God's decree may require sacrifice and stepping out of comfort zones
- There is a special grace available for this generation to obey God's call
- Fasting and prayer are powerful tools for aligning with God's purposes

Scripture Reference:

- Luke 2:1 - "It came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed."
- Psalm 2 - God's decree concerning His Son and His kingship

Stories:

- The Christmas story, focusing on Mary and Joseph's response to earthly and heavenly decrees
- The story of Esther and how she countered an evil decree with a new decree from the king
- A brief mention of a videographer helping a sick child fulfill his bucket list by skydiving, illustrating the mix of fear and excitement in responding to God's call

Small Group Study Guide – God's Decree

Small Group Guide: Responding to God's Decree

Opening Prayer

Key Takeaways:

1. Every generation has a God-given mandate and a God-given adversary.
2. We are living in a prophetic time of transition on the planet.
3. God's decrees for our lives are more powerful than any earthly decrees.
4. We have a choice to align ourselves with heaven's decree or earthly decrees.
5. Faithfulness in small things positions us for God's favor and calling.

Discussion Questions:

1. Pastor Rob mentioned that "it came to pass in those days" is a timestamp on history. How do you think our current time will be remembered in history? What role do you believe Christians should play in shaping this time?
2. Reflect on the contrast between earthly decrees (like Caesar's census) and heavenly decrees (like the announcement of Jesus' birth). How do you see this contrast playing out in our world today?
3. The sermon highlighted the importance of choosing which decree we will live by. What are some practical ways we can intentionally align ourselves with God's decrees in our daily lives?
4. Pastor Rob spoke about the favor of God being upon us, like it was on Mary. How does this concept of divine favor challenge or encourage you? How might it change the way you approach your life and calling?
5. Discuss the idea of being "pregnant" with the purposes of God for our generation. What do you think this means practically for us as individuals and as a church?
6. The sermon touched on the fear and joy that come with responding to God's call. Share a time when you experienced both fear and excitement in following God's leading.

Practical Applications:

1. Commit to participating in the upcoming 21-day fast. Discuss as a group how you can support each other during this time of seeking God.

2. Take time this week to reflect on any negative "decrees" that have been spoken over your life. Write them down, then find and meditate on Scripture that counters these with God's truth about you.
3. Identify one area in your life where you need to be more faithful in the "small things." Make a plan to grow in consistency in this area over the next month.
4. Set aside time daily to listen for God's "decree" for your life. Journal any impressions or scriptures you receive.
5. As a group, brainstorm ways you can be more intentional about declaring God's decrees over your families, workplaces, and community.

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for His divine decrees over our lives and ask for grace to align ourselves with His purposes for our generation.

Discussion Questions – God's Decree

How might understanding our generation's 'God-given mandate' and 'God-given adversary' change the way we approach our daily lives and spiritual walk?

In what ways can we actively choose to live by heaven's decree rather than earthly decrees, and what might that look like practically?

How does the concept of being 'pregnant with the person of Jesus Christ' challenge or inspire your understanding of the church's role in the world today?

What does it mean to offer our 'wandering hearts' to God, and how might this act of surrender transform our relationship with Him?

How can we cultivate a spirit of faithfulness in the 'hidden, secret, and smelly' aspects of our lives, like the shepherds watching their flocks by night?

In what ways might God be calling us to 'move' in response to His decrees, even when it's inconvenient or challenging?

How does the idea of 'favor' from God, as exemplified in Mary's story, apply to our lives today, and how should we respond to it?

What might it look like for us to 'declare the decree' of God in our generation, and how can we prepare ourselves to do so effectively?

How can we balance the 'fear and joy' that often accompany obedience to God's calling, especially when it requires significant life changes?

In what ways can fasting and prayer help us to better hear and respond to God's decrees for our lives and our generation?

Scriptures – God's Decree

Here are the [scripture references mentioned or alluded to in the sermon](#), along with some relevant verses for general themes discussed:

1. Luke 2:1
2. Exodus 3:2-4 (allusion to Moses and the burning bush)
3. Jeremiah 1:5
4. Psalm 90:12
5. Acts 13:36
6. Luke 2:8-14
7. Revelation 12 (allusion to the woman clothed with the sun)
8. Psalm 2:1-7
9. Revelation 13:8
10. 1 Corinthians 10:11
11. Luke 1:30-33
12. Revelation 12 (mentioned again)
13. Matthew 28:8 (allusion to women at the tomb with fear and joy)
14. Romans 5:2
15. Hebrews 11:32 (allusion to "time would fail me")
16. Esther 8 (general reference to the story)
17. John 10:10
18. Psalm 118:17
19. 3 John 1:2

[Additional relevant verses for themes discussed:](#)

20. Matthew 6:33 (seeking God's kingdom first)
21. James 4:8 (drawing near to God)
22. Isaiah 55:8-9 (God's thoughts and ways higher than ours)
23. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (new creation in Christ)
24. Ephesians 2:10 (created for good works)
25. Matthew 9:37-38 (harvest is plentiful, workers are few)
26. 1 Peter 2:9 (chosen generation)
27. Daniel 12:3 (those who lead many to righteousness)
28. Matthew 6:16-18 (fasting)
29. Isaiah 58:6-7 (true fasting)
30. Acts 13:2-3 (fasting and prayer in the early church)

Devotional – God's Decree

Here's a 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide based on the themes from the transcription:

Day 1: God's Eternal Decree

Reading: Psalm 2:1-12

Devotional: As we begin this journey, let's reflect on God's sovereign plan for humanity. Just as the Christmas story unfolded according to God's decree, our lives are part of His grand design. The world may seem chaotic, with earthly powers vying for control, but God's decree stands firm. How does knowing this impact your perspective on current events and personal challenges? Take time to surrender your plans to God's greater purpose, echoing Mary's words, "Be it unto me according to your word."

Day 2: Finding Favor with God

Reading: Luke 1:26-38

Devotional: God's favor rests upon His people, not because of our merit, but due to His grace. Like Mary, we may feel unworthy of God's calling, yet He chooses to use us. Reflect on areas where you struggle to accept God's favor. How might embracing His love and approval change your self-perception and actions? Today, step out in faith, trusting that God's favor empowers you to fulfill His purposes in your generation.

Day 3: Bringing Forth Christ

Reading: Galatians 4:19-20, Colossians 1:27, Revelation 12

Devotional: As believers, we are called to "birth" Christ into our world – not physically, but spiritually. Paul speaks of laboring until Christ is formed in the Galatians. How are you allowing Christ to be manifested through your life? Consider areas where you need to yield more fully to His indwelling presence. Pray for God to use you as a vessel, bringing His light and love to those around you.

Day 4: Responding to Heaven's Call

Reading: Esther 4:12-17

Devotional: Like Esther, we are alive "for such a time as this." God has positioned us strategically in this generation. What "decrees" or callings has God placed on your life? Are there areas where fear or comfort are holding you back from fully responding? Remember, God's grace is sufficient for the task He's given you. Take a step today towards embracing your divine assignment, trusting in God's empowering presence.

Day 5: Declaring God's Decrees

Reading: Job 22:21-28

Devotional: Our words have power when aligned with God's truth. As we conclude this week, focus on the authority we have in Christ to declare God's promises over our lives and circumstances. Are there negative words or diagnoses you've accepted as truth? Replace

them with God's decrees of life, health, and purpose. Spend time in prayer, boldly proclaiming God's Word over your situations, family, and community. Let faith arise as you partner with heaven's declarations.