

## The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination - Lesson #6, The Providence of God

**WSC Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?** A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

Providence - God's care of the world and His ultimate supervision of it.

*The Scriptures very clearly teach that all things outside of God owe not merely their original creation, but their continued existence, with all their properties and Powers, to the will of God. He upholds all things by the word of His power, (Hebrews 1:3). He is before all things, and in Him all things consist, (Colossians 1:17). "Thou art Jehovah, even thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is in them, and thou preservest them all," (Nehemiah 9:6). "In Him we live, and move and have our being," (Acts 17:28). He is "over all, and through all, and in all," (Ephesians 4:6).*

*Throughout the Bible the laws of nature, the course of history, the varying fortunes of individuals, are ever attributed to God's providential control. All things, both in heaven and earth, from the seraphim down to the tiny atom, are ordered by His never-failing providence.*

*Yet as regards God's providence we are to understand that He is intimately concerned with every detail in the affairs of men and in the course of nature.*

*"To suppose that anything is too great to be comprehended in His control or anything so minute as to escape His notice; or that the infinitude of particulars can distract His attention, is to forget that God is infinite..." - Charles Hodge*

*[God] does what He will with His own. To some He gives riches, to others honor, to others health, to others certain talents for music, oratory, art, finance, statesmanship, etc. Others are poor, unknown, born in dishonor, the victims of disease, and live lives of wretchedness. Some are placed in Christian lands where they receive all the benefits of the Gospel; others live and die in the darkness of heathenism. Some are brought through faith unto salvation; others are left to perish in unbelief. And to a very large extent these external things, which are not the result of individual choice, decide the person's life course and eternal destiny. Both Scripture and every day experience teach us that God gives to some what He withholds from others. If it be asked why He does this, or why he does not save all, the only available answer is found in the words of the Lord Jesus, "Yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight."*

*"If suffering from illness, I can look at it as a result of a chance invasion of microorganisms in my body, or I can say that even microorganisms are ultimately upheld, directed, and disposed by the wise and holy providence of God... If I view my pain, suffering, loneliness, and grief as a cosmic accident, then the futility of life exacerbates my pain. However, if I see these painful things as coming to me from the hand of a good, holy, and kind Providence, who is working all things together for my good, I will have a reason to endure it. That will not erase my pain, but it will help me to endure it without bitterness." - R.C. Sproul, Sr*

*It is to be remembered that those who receive these gifts, whether spiritual or temporal, receive them through pure grace, while in regard to the others God simply withholds those*

*gifts which He was under no obligation to bestow. Nations, as well as individuals, are thus in the hands of God, who appoints the bounds of their habitation, and controls their destiny... God is no mere spectator of the universe He has made, but is everywhere present and active, the all-sustaining ground, and all-governing power of all that is.*

God's providential control extends over:

A. Nature or the physical world.

**Nahum 1:3** The Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, And the clouds are the dust of His feet.

**Matt 5:45** that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

**Amos 4:7** I also withheld rain from you, When there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, And where it did not rain the part withered.

B. The animal creation

**Matt 6:26** Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

**Dan 6:22** My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me

C. Nations

**Dan 2:21** And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings

**Judges 6:1** Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years

**Habb 1:6** For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation which marches through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs.

D. Individual men

**Ps 37:23** The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way.

**Prov 16:9** A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.

**Isa 64:8** But now, O Lord, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.

**Prov 21:1** The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

E. The free acts of men

**Phil 2:13** for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

**Eze 36:27** I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them

F. The sinful acts of men

**John 19:11** Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.

**Ex 14:17** And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen.