

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

Romans 8:28

REVIEW

We believe, first, that God _____ this universe.

Secondly, we believe that God is _____ all that He created. This preservation is just as important an act as the creation. He “upholds all things by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:3); the heavens have their stability and continuance from him; the earth, which hangs upon nothing (Job 26:7), is born up by Him; otherwise the earth and the inhabitants of it would be dissolved; the angels in heaven are confirmed in their estate by him, and have their standing and security in him; the elect of God are in his hands, and are his peculiar care and charge, and therefore shall never perish; yes, all mankind lives and moves, and has their being in Him (Acts 17:28); the whole frame of nature would burst asunder and break in pieces, were it not held together by Him.

Thirdly, we believe that God is exercising _____ over all that He created and is preserving. This sovereign control is called . . . **PROVIDENCE**.

I. Definition

A. Literally, “pro” + “video” → fore see.

B. But it means more: that continuous activity whereby God makes all events in the physical, mental, and spiritual realms work out for His purpose.

II. The Providence of God Is Logical.

A. As _____, God is consequently the _____ of the universe. As such He would be expected to _____ His own possession.

B. Being _____ and _____, He can be expected to govern benevolently and competently.

C. Being _____, He can be expected to accomplish all exactly as He wishes.

D. Therefore, based on the _____ of God, CHRISTIANS CAN REST CONFIDENTLY IN THE ULTIMATE TRIUMPH OF GOD IN ALL THINGS.

III. The Providence of God is Scriptural. The Bible indicates:

A. God exercises sovereign control over the _____.

1. Sunshine, wind, lightning, rain, thunder, waters, hail, ice, snow, and frost are all subject to His bidding.

2. Sun – “He maketh the sun to rise . . .” (Matt. 5:45)

Stars – God “binds,” “loosens,” “brings forth,” and “guides” (Job 38:33ff)

Mountains – God “removes” and “overturns” (Job 9:5)

Earth – God “shakes” it (Heb. 12:26)

Ground – God makes it to give “fruitful seasons” (Acts 14:17)

B. God exercises sovereign control over the _____.

1. The life of every living creature is in the hand of God. (Job 12:10)
2. All plants – God “prepared a gourd and made it to come up over Jonah.” (4:6)
God “clothes the grass of the field.” (Matt. 5:30)
3. All birds – Our heavenly Father “feeds them.” (Matt. 6:28)
Not one sparrow falls to the ground “w/o our Father.” (Matt. 10:29)
4. All beasts – Lions “seek their meat from God.” (Ps. 104:21)
Animals die when God “takes away their breath.” (Ps. 104:29)
5. All fish – God “prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah.” (Jon. 1:17), and
He sent a fish to Peter w/ a piece of money in his mouth. (Matt. 17:27)

C. God exercises sovereign control over all areas of _____ existence.

1. Our _____ and _____

“Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” (Ps. 139:16)

God “separated” Paul “from his mother's womb.” (Gal. 1:15)

And He said to Jeremiah, “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” (Jer. 1:5)

2. Our _____

Our Heavenly Father knows we have need of food, clothing, etc. (Matt. 6:32), so He provides.

He careth for us. (I Pet. 5:7) He keeps us, and He will not slumber. (Ps. 121:3)

3. Our _____ and _____

The Lord “putteth down one, and setteth up another.” (Ps. 75:7)

4. Our _____

“The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.” (Prov. 21:1)

“Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 16:16-17)

“The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.”
(Prov. 16:1)

5. The time and circumstances of our _____

He signified to Peter by what death Peter would glorify God (John 21:19).

Which of us by taking thought can add one step to the length of life God has ordained for us?
(Matt. 6:27)

6. Our eternal _____

The saved – “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.”
(Ps. 73:24)

The lost – “Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an
horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.” (Ps. 11:6)

In sum: God made all things, preserves all things, and governs all things to the ultimate end which He has predetermined. Nothing can stand in the way of the end which God has determined.

- Nothing can frustrate it.
- Nothing can delay it.
- Certainly nothing or nobody can stop it.

The predetermined will of God can not be lost, slowed, sabotaged, forgotten, missed, spun, or denied.

At the consummation of this age, every rock, tree, and mountain, every thing on the earth, above the earth, and in the earth, along with every tongue and every knee of every soul shall see the complete and perfect and absolute will of God accomplished as He had pre-ordained before the foundation of the earth.

Regardless of any events or trends we observe, or regardless of prevailing moods or predictions of our culture based on those events or trends, **CHRISTIANS CAN REST CONFIDENTLY IN THE ULTIMATE TRIUMPH OF GOD IN ALL THINGS.**

And since Christians have surrendered all interest in their own agenda, their own pleasures, and are now living solely for the agenda, the pleasure of God, they can be thankful in all things because they see what is invisible to those in darkness: God is having His way and is directing, and influencing, and over-ruling all things. God is on throne and is doing all things well.

Friends, we can rest confidently and we can thank God continually whatever happens.

We may or not see our nation's influence in the world diminish.

We may or may not see erosion in our liberties to worship or to speak freely.

We may see moral decline all about us.

We may see a reduction in our standard of living.

But we can still rest confidently and thank God continually whatever happens.

QUESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS THAT MIGHT ARISE AT THIS POINT

1. What's the use of *doing anything* if God is going to get it done even if we don't help?

A. Because if we don't do _____ we do _____.

“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”
(Matt. 12:30)

B. Because God *says* to do good.

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Tit. 2:14)

“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.” (Tit. 3:1)

2. If God predetermines every thing, then how can He hold anyone to be guilty?

A. This is ultimately a question about _____. Another version of this question is, “Why shouldn't I wait to do good until God inclines me that way?” But we are not mere chess pieces moved by God.

B. Here are some basic truths:

1. Sometimes God restrains us from sin. This is called _____ Providence.
 - a. God said to Abimilech: “I withheld thee from sinning against me.” (Gen. 20:6)
 - b. David prayed, “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins.” (Ps. 19:13)
 - c. Look at our own Lord's Prayer: “Lead us not”
2. Sometimes God allows sin to take its course. This is called _____ Providence.
 - a. “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.” (Hos. 4:17)
 - b. “Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.” (Acts 14:16)
 - c. “Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.” (Matt. 19:8)
3. Sometimes God allows evil, but directs the way it goes. This: _____ Providence.
 - a. Joseph to his brothers: “Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.” (Gen. 50:20)
 - b. Jesus to Judas: “What you do, do quickly.” (John 13:27)
 - c. Jesus answered Pilate, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.” (John 19:11)
4. God also sets the limit that evil and its effects can go. This: _____ Providence.
 - a. See what God said to Satan concerning Job: “Behold, All that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.” (Job 1:12)
 - b. See also I Cor. 10:13.

In sum: All evil acts are under the complete control of God. They occur only as He permits. They go only as far as He permits. They accomplish the end which He chooses. These truths should provide us great comfort as we suffer evil due to our stand for Christ.

3. What if I just want my agenda, my good pleasure, to be accomplished?

A. It's just not a viable choice. It isn't going to happen. We may be under the impression that we can make this choice and survive it, but this impression is a delusion.

B. The Bible calls this choice the imagining of a “vain thing.” See Psalm 2.

Listen: For every truly redeemed soul:

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|------------------|----------------------|---|
| * _____ changes. | * _____ persecutes. | * _____ helps. |
| * _____ changes. | * _____ strengthens. | * _____ causes all to work together for good. |

Listen to Eli: "It is the _____ what seemeth Him good." (I Samuel 3:18)

Boy gets sold by brothers into slavery in a foreign land.

Slaves must travel land of Egypt gathering their own straw for bricks.

Thirsty travelers in desert find water ... and it is undrinkable.

Woman is barren for 20 years while the "co-wife" has one mocking child after another.

Girl suffers for her beauty and is placed into a heathen man's harem.

Virtuous single girl becomes pregnant without having known a man.

Godly young men are taken from their families and altered not to have wives or children.

Greatest man born of woman except for Christ Himself is beheaded at around age 30.

Your story?

DISCUSSION

1. Explain how today's verse applies to your life. Be specific and expansive. Again, the verse is, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

2. How might this verse apply to current events?