

# VI. Theology, the Doctrine of God: His Works- Providence

1. **Definition:** That continuous agency of God by which he makes all the events of the physical and moral universe fulfill the original design with which he created.
2. **Includes God's Preservation work:** God maintains and continues the properties in how he created them.
  - a. Hebrews 1:3, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."
  - b. Col. 1:17 "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."
  - c. II Pet. 3:7, "By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men."
3. **Includes God's Concurrence:** God cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinct properties to cause them to act as they do.
  - a. **Inanimate objects:** Psalm 135: 6, 7 "The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths. He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses." Matt. 5:45, "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."
  - b. **Animals:** Matt. 6:26, "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them."
  - c. **Random chance:** Prov. 16:33, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD."
  - d. **Nations:** Psalm 22:28, "...or dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations."
  - e. **Our lives:** Psalm 139:16, "your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." Jer. 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."
4. **Includes God's Government:** God has a purpose in all that he does in the world and he providentially governs or directs all things in order that they accomplish his purposes.
  - a. I Cor. 15:27, for he "has put everything under his feet."
  - b. **The Will of God:**
    - 1) His revealed will. "Moral will."
    - 2) His Secret will. "Providential government."

- c. Extending to the free actions of men:
    - 1) **To men's free actions in general:** Psalm 33:14, "from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth." Jer. 10:23, "I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps."
    - 2) **To the sinful acts of men:** II Thess. 2:11-12, "For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie <sup>12</sup> and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness."
  - d. With respect to men's sinfulness, God's providence is:
    - 1) **"Preventive."** Withholding from sin- Psalm 19:13, "Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression." Hosea 2:6, "Therefore I will block her path with thorn bushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way."
    - 2) **"Permissive."** Refusing to withhold from sin- Rom. 1:21, "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened."
    - 3) **"Directive."** Overruling evil for good- Gen. 50:20, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." Acts 4: 27-28, "Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen."
    - 4) **"Determinative."** Prescribing its bounds and effects- Psalm 124:2-3, "if the LORD had not been on our side when men attacked us, when their anger flared against us, they would have swallowed us alive." I Cor. 10:13, "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."
5. **Included God's Decree:** The eternal plans of God whereby he brings about everything that happens. Psalm 139:16, "your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." Eph. 2:10, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

6. **Issues to consider:**

a. **Free will:**

b. **Personal Responsibility:**

c. **The problem of Evil:**