

Character and Attributes of God – Providence and Decrees

November 03, 2019

God's Providence

Definitions

- *...that continued exercise of the divine energy whereby the Creator **preserves** all His creatures, is **operative** in all that comes to pass in the world and **directs** all things to their appointed end. -Berkhof*
- *Providence is God's ordering all outcomes and events of things, after the counsel of his will, to his own glory. – Thomas Watson*
- *...the continuous going forth of God's power whereby He causes all features of the created universe to fulfil the design for which he created them. -Culver*
- *God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that he (1) keeps them existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them; (2) cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do; and (3) directs them to fulfill his purposes. – Grudem*

Biblical Support for God's Providence

General Providence -Psalm 136; Psalm 105

Preservation

God keeps all created things existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them.

Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3; Acts 17:28; Nehemiah 9:6; 1Samuel 2:9; Psalm 127; Psalm 145:14-15; Matthew 10:29; John 10:27-30; Phil 1:6; Genesis 28:15; 1Corinthians 10:13; Revelation 3:10

Concurrence

God cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do.

Psalm 148:8; Psalm 135:6; Psalm 104:14; Matthew 6:26; Matthew 10:29; Psalm 104:27-29; Proverbs 16:33; Samuel 24:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1; Job 12:23; Psalm 139:6; Jer 1:5; Galatians 1:15-16; Psalm 75:6-7; Luke 1:52; Deut 32:48-50 -Moses; Acts 14:16.

Government

God has a purpose in all that he does in the world and he providentially governs or directs all things that they accomplish his purposes.

Psalm 97:1; Isaiah 40:15; Philippians 2:10-11

Application

- Because God is providential, we act.
- Because God is providential, we are encouraged and commanded to pray.
- Because God is providential, we share the Gospel with others and let God do his saving work where he will.
- God's providence is an incentive to seek out his revealed will and follow it.

God's Decrees

Definitions

- *The eternal plans of God whereby, before the creation of the world, he determined to bring about everything that happens. – Grudem*
- *God's government of the world is controlled by a plan. God's government of the of His creation is what theologians call providence. And the plan that providence executes is called predestination, or the doctrine of the decrees of God. -Berkhof*
- *The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. - WSC Q7*

Biblical Support for God's Decree

-His eternal purpose.

Isaiah 46:9; Psalm 33; Ephesians 3:11; Revelation 13:8; John 13:18; Acts 13:48

-The counsel of His will.

Job 28:26-27; Prov 3:19; Romans 11:34; Romans 10:12; Hebrews 11:3; Proverbs 19:21; Ephesians 1:11

-For His own glory

. Romans 11:36; Isaiah 42:8; Jeremiah 13:16; 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; Ephesians 1:12; 1:17; 3:16; Phil 1:11; 1:26 Revelation 4:11

-Foreordained Whatsoever comes to pass.

Ephesians 1:1-12 Acts 2:23 Isaiah 46:10-11; Romans 8:28-30 and 1 Peter 1:20

Application

- Deeper appreciation, comfort, understanding of who God is.
- Comfort and consolation in trials, more intimate reliance on God.
- Meaning for our lives in general. A purpose to bring God glory.
- Increased joy and diminishment of fear as we share the gospel with others. Cause to pray and trust and obey God.

God Moves in a Mysterious Way by William Cowper

God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform;
he plants his footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill
he treasures up his bright designs, and works his sov'reign will.
Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; the clouds ye so much dread
are big with mercy, and shall break in blessings on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust him for his grace;
behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding ev'ry hour;
the bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flow'r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain.