

The Sovereignty of God

God's Nature

God's Sovereignty Defined

God is Sovereign. But what does this mean? The word “*sovereignty*” means “*SUPREME AUTHORITY*” and in earthly realms speaks of one who holds the *highest* place of authority such as a Monarch, or President or Ruler of a province or territory. But consider that when this term is applied to God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, that the meaning takes on a much fuller sense. God is in heaven and having made the world by His own power out of nothing, and is even now sustaining everything by His powerful Word, God is **THE SOVEREIGN KING** above all earthly and heavenly powers and authorities. As the Scripture says.....

Psalm 103:19 - 19 The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; And **His sovereignty rules over all.** NASB

God possesses **absolute dominion** and authority over all things. So He is said to sit on a “throne” in heaven! Just think how ridiculous it would be to say that God created the universe, but He is not in control of what takes place in it. *Well the truth is God not only controls nature and history, but He literally sustains the entire universe by his power, and orders the events of his entire creation to accomplish his own purposes and plans.* Friends, we must understand that what is happening in the world is happening at the express purpose and will of God, who rules the world and all who are in it. *He is "the Lord of Heaven and Earth"*(Acts 17:24) and whatsoever happens in the world, happens because God has permitted, indeed He has decreed it to happen(**THE DECREES OF GOD**). Although there is much evil in the world, which God hates, He is allowing these things to achieve His eternal purposes which will, without a doubt, come to pass. God not only permits the events of human history, but has ordained them from eternity past(**FOREORDINATION**), and is furthermore actively involved in seeing that they all come to pass(**PROVIDENCE**), fulfilling all of His plans and purposes.

Proverbs 16:4 - 4 **The LORD has made everything for its own purpose,** Even the wicked for the day of evil. NASB

That the divine purpose could meet with frustration is *unthinkable*, for then it could not be the divine purpose! Failure of God's purpose is failure of His sovereignty. God cannot be God and NOT be Sovereign, for then He would NOT be God. Scripture is very clear about this!

Ephesians 1:11 - 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined **according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.** NASB

Even Satan was created by God to achieve the very purpose for which God made him.

Isaiah 10:15 - 15 **Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops with it? Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it?** That would be like a club wielding those who lift it, Or like a rod lifting him who is not wood. NASB

Isaiah 54:16 - 16 "Behold, I Myself have created the smith who blows the fire of coals, And brings out a weapon for its work; **And I have created the destroyer to ruin.** NASB

Exposition of 1 Chronicles 29:11-13

Let us closely examine how the Scripture describes this Sovereignty of God.

1 Chronicles 29:11-13 - 11 **Thine, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O LORD, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all.** 12 Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone. 13 Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name. NASB

A. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty – What words can describe the greatness of God and His power? Surely we cannot describe the greatness of God because He is infinite and we are finite. Listen to the verse as it speaks of His greatness.....His IS the **POWER and GLORY and VICTORY and MAJESTY**.....

God is the source of all **POWER** –

Jeremiah 32:17- 17'Ah Lord GOD! Behold, **Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee**, NASB

God's is the **GLORY** –

Revelation 15:3-4 - Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations. 4 "**Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?** For Thou alone art holy; For all the nations will come and worship before Thee, For Thy righteous acts have been revealed." NASB

He will always prevail with **VICTORY** against His enemies –

Isaiah 42:13 - 13 The LORD will go forth like a warrior, He will arouse His zeal like a man of war. He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry. **He will prevail against His enemies** . NASB

The authority of His **MAJESTY** is the most regal and beautiful, stately and splendid, magnificent grandeur of all.

Psalms 96:4-9 - For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. 5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens. 6 **Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary**. 7 Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. 8 **Ascribe to the LORD the glory of His name**; Bring an offering, and come into His courts. 9 Worship the LORD in holy attire; Tremble before Him, all the earth. NASB

B. indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O LORD – The **Scripture plainly declares** that **GOD CREATED all things and is the Possessor of everything**. Since God is the creator of all things, He also is the rightful owner and proprietor of all things. He possesses everything and therefore has a Sovereign Right or prerogative to do as He pleases.

Exodus 9:29 - 29 And Moses said to him, "As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be hail no longer, **that you may know that the earth is the LORD'S**. NASB

Exodus 19:5 - 5'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, **for all the earth is Mine**; NASB

Deut 10:14 - 14 "Behold, **to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it**. NASB

Job 41:11 - 11 "Who has given to Me that I should repay him? **Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine**. NASB

Psalms 24:1 - **The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains**, The world, and those who dwell in it. NASB

Psalms 89:11 - 11 The heavens are Thine, the earth also is Thine; **The world and all it contains**, Thou hast founded them. NASB

The **Scripture plainly declares** that **GOD RULES and does as He pleases** with anything and everything that He has made. God is **TOTALLY FREE** to do whatever He pleases.

Daniel 4:34-35 - For **His dominion is an everlasting dominion**, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35 "And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But **He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand** Or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?' NASB

Psalms 135:5-6 - 5 For I know that **the LORD is great, And that our Lord is above all gods. 6 Whatever the LORD pleases, He does**, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps. NASB

C. and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all. – The **Scripture plainly declares** that **God is the highest authority** and that He is the One who **establishes all other authority** in heaven and earth.

Romans 13:1 - 1 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God**. NASB

God is highly exalted above everything that is. Therefore God exalts Himself above us and everything and commands that we worship Him, because it is right and proper to do so. Consider how appropriate this is? Would it be right for some other being to occupy God's great seat of

authority? Would it be proper for a creature to somehow be exalted above the One who created it? Indeed this cannot be, otherwise He would not be God. This is why idolatry is the great sin of mankind, as we seek to give improper place to some thing other than God who should properly be exalted in our view as King and Sovereign over us! This is high treason against the greatest majesty that exists! Who can speak of what a great sin that unbelief in God truly is? Who can describe the folly and shame that this represents? Shall we slap the hand that feeds us? Shall we rail with clinched fist against the One who holds our life's breathe in His hands? This is why God exalts Himself above us and commands that we worship Him, because it is right and proper, it is in reality the highest good of the creature to worship and praise the creator!

Psalm 97:9 - 9 For Thou art **the LORD Most High over all the earth; Thou art exalted far above all gods.** NASB

Exodus 20:2-3 - 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 "**You shall have no other gods before Me.** NASB

Isaiah 2:11-12 - 11 The proud look of man will be abased, And the loftiness of man will be humbled, And **the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.** 12 For the LORD of hosts will have a day of reckoning Against everyone who is proud and lofty, And against everyone who is lifted up, That he may be abased. NASB

D. 12 Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone. – God in His Sovereignty, dispenses as He pleases to all the peoples of the earth. Here the Scriptures says that God is the one who gives riches to the rich, honor to the honorable, and it is because He is the Ruler of all. Here the Scripture explicitly states that God has the power and the might to raise up or exalt someone, or give them strength. Obviously the inverse is true, if God decides to abase someone and make them weak, that is His prerogative. This is in fact resounded in the Scriptures in many places. God rules His creation, including the earth and men and angels by a mighty Providence. God is Sovereign over prosperity and poverty of everyone!

Exodus 4:11 - 11 And the LORD said to him, "**Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him dumb or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?**" NASB

Isaiah 45:7 - 7 The One forming light and creating darkness, **Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.** NASB

1 Samuel 2:7-9 - 7 "**The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts.** 8 "He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He set the world on them. 9 "He keeps the feet of His godly ones, But the wicked ones are silenced in darkness; **For not by might shall a man prevail.** NASB

The **Scripture plainly declares** that *God is Sovereign over the LIFE AND DEATH of every creature.* Man's days are determined by God, He has set the limit and they cannot be exceeded. No one lives unless God decrees it and no one dies unless God decrees it. He is the Author, Giver, and the Sustainer of every living thing. He holds in His hand the lives of His beloved ones and that of His enemies also! Even Satan the father of lies, the destroyer, owes his next breathe to the Almighty!

Job 14:5 - 5 "Since **his days are determined, The number of his months is with Thee, And his limits Thou hast set so that he cannot pass.** NASB

Deuteronomy 32:39 - 39 "See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; **It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal;** And there is no one who can deliver from My hand. NASB

1 Samuel 2:6 - 6 "**The LORD kills and makes alive;** He brings down to Sheol and raises up. NASB

Job 12:9-10 - 9 "Who among all these does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this, 10 **In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind?** NASB

Matthew 10:29-30 - 29 "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And **yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.** 30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. NASB

The **Scripture plainly declares** that *GOD SUSTAINS and MAINTAINS all things which He has created.*

Hebrews 1:3 - 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and **upholds all things by the word of His power**. NASB

Job 34:14-15 - 14 "If He should determine to do so, **If He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath, 15 All flesh would perish together, And man would return to dust**. NASB

E. 13 Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name. – Now here is a proper response to the knowledge of God's Sovereignty. It is to acknowledge His greatness and power, and to humbly thank Him for WHO He is and whatever we have. More than this we are to praise His glorious name!

Psalm 106:1 - **Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good**; For His lovingkindness is everlasting. NASB

Psalm 33:1 - Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; **Praise is becoming to the upright**. NASB

Summary

In summary we have seen that the Bible clearly teaches that God is Sovereign over His entire creation and that the *nature* of this Sovereignty is absolute and Supreme Authority, which is exercised over all things He has created. A good summary definition we could use then is given by our dear brother Charles Hodge in His work on Theology, page 440.....

"Sovereignty is not a property of the divine nature, but a prerogative arising out of the perfections of the Supreme Being. If God be a Spirit, and therefore a person, infinite, eternal, and immutable in His being and perfections, the Creator and Preserver of the Universe, He is of right its absolute sovereign. Infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, with the right of possession, which belongs to God in all His creatures, are the immutable foundation of His dominion."

Dear reader, here now the word of the Lord!

Deuteronomy 4:39 - 39 Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, **that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other**. NASB

Application

How do we apply this doctrine to our life and/or how does it affect us, our thinking and living?

- We must recognize Him as the Sovereign Authority in our lives by humbly submitting to His will. (**Deut 4:39-40, 27:10, Job 2:10, Lam 3:37-41, Jer 44:23, Eccl 12:13-14, Luke 11:28**)
- We must love God in His Sovereignty and find our joy in the fact the goodness of God rules over our lives, decisions, and everything that we have and are! (**Matt 22:37-39, Rom 12:12**)
- We must realize that trust in God's Sovereign and gracious hand is a truth of amazing security for us to rest in. (**Romans 8:28,8:31**)

Why is it important?

- If this teaching of Sovereignty is true, could anything be more important to the nature of all things than this? (**Rev 14:6-7**)
- If this teaching of Sovereignty is true, could anything be more important to the way we live our lives be than this? (**Eccl 12:13-14, Prov 1:7, Ps 147:11, Ps 112:1**)
- In having a proper biblical understanding, remember that every theological heresy flows from a misconception of the character and nature of God. Therefore since Sovereignty is a prerogative of the divine nature, it has serious implications in our understanding of God and His Kingdom. (**Prov 9:10**)

Why is it controversial?

The reason that this doctrine is so controversial is that the very nature of sin is a rebellion against God's Sovereignty. Man naturally resists God's Authority and has tried to exalt his own autonomy since he first decided to disobey the commandment of God in the garden. Therefore mankind is naturally repulsed by the idea of having someone of higher authority than himself and seeks to usurp that authority continually. This is the great crime of humanity and it is worthy of death. (**Prov 29:15, Isa 53:6, Rom 3:10-18, 8:7-8**)

Sovereignty and God's Attributes

Contemplate how God's Authority is related to all of His attributes. Indeed they work together in perfect harmony to manifest God's perfection in every way! Consider just a few!

Sovereignty and Wisdom – God uses His authority in accordance with perfect wisdom. God always makes decisions and executes His authority in such a way as to fulfill the eternal counsel of His will. Everything He does seeks to fulfill the purpose for which He planned it.

Jeremiah 10:12 - 12 It is He who made the earth by His power, **Who established the world by His wisdom; And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens.** NASB

Sovereignty and Love – God's authority is always dispensed with concern for the objects of His love. God is motivated in the exercise of His authority for the benefit and blessing of those to whom He obligates Himself by covenant, indeed to all who fear Him and call upon Him.

Psalm 103:11-13 - 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So **great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.** 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 Just as a father has compassion on his children, So **the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.** NASB

Sovereignty and Power – God has an ability to bring to pass whatsoever He pleases so that the use of His authority cannot be resisted. God brings to pass whatever His wisdom and love decide. He who cannot do what He will and perform all His pleasure cannot be God!

Isaiah 46:9-11 - 9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And **I will accomplish all My good pleasure**'; 11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. **I have planned it, surely I will do it.** NASB

Sovereignty and Knowledge – When God uses His authority it is always with a perfect knowledge, for He is the source of it. Nothing ever escapes the attention of God or is somehow undone or misguided. God's authority is always exercised with a complete knowledge of what has happened, what is happening, and what will happen as a result. He never errs, never changes and never overlooks anything!

Isaiah 40:14 - 14 With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And **who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge.** And informed Him of the way of understanding? NASB

Sovereignty and Holiness – When God uses His authority, it is always motivated by a hatred of sin, a spotless purity, and a zeal for His own honor. He expects His creatures to revere His holiness and gives serious warnings and threatenings toward those who fail to honor Him. God must be zealous for His own honor because He is what is truly honorable and MOST worthy of praise and glory. A failure to revere and honor God's holiness is the very definition of sin itself!

Revelation 14:6-7 - 6 And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having **an eternal gospel to preach** to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; 7 and he said with a loud voice, **"Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him** who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters." NASB

Sovereignty and Righteousness – The foundation of everything that God does is justice. All of His judgments are morally perfect and upright. In fact, God Himself is the very standard or what is just and righteous. God's authority is always executed in perfect righteousness. Whatever is right, is right because it is approved by God!

Deuteronomy 32:4 - 4 "The Rock! His work is perfect, For **all His ways are just**; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, **Righteous and upright is He.** NASB

Consider then because all of these things are true of God, and He is the highest authority, we have ground for tremendous security and exceeding joy! We can rest in the security of God's righteous judgment and find Him to be a refuge and strength from all the adversity we face.

Psalm 5:11 - 11 But let **all who take refuge in Thee be glad, Let them ever sing for joy**; And mayest Thou shelter them, That those who love Thy name may exult in Thee. NASB

Romans 8:28 - 28 And we know that **God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God,** to those who are called according to His purpose. NASB

The Sovereignty of God

God's Nature

Omnipotence

Consider how God's power is related to His Sovereignty. If God be All-Powerful, than He has the ability to do as He pleases and is therefore by default the **SUPREME AUTHORITY**.

Job 23:13 - 13 "But He is unique and who can turn Him? And **what His soul desires, that He does.**

NASB

Isaiah 43:13 - 13 "Even from eternity I am He; And **there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?"** NASB

Psalms 115:3 - 3 But our God is in the heavens; **He does whatever He pleases.** NASB

Let us see then how the Scripture speaks of God's mighty power, indeed it describes Him as Omnipotent or All-Powerful. The **Scripture plainly declares** that *God can do anything and nothing is too hard for Him.*

Jeremiah 32:17 - 17 "Ah Lord GOD! Behold, **Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee,** NASB

Matthew 19:26 - 26 And looking upon them Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, **but with God all things are possible."** NASB

Job 42:2 - 2 "I know that **Thou canst do all things,** And that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted. NASB

In fact, God had the creative power to make the universe from nothing, and He sustains the same universe by His power. He made the world for His own pleasure and by His own will.

Revelation 4:11 - 11 "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for **Thou didst create all things,** and **because of Thy will they existed, and were created."** NAS

His creation is just a small example of his mighty power. In the creation of the universe, God's resources were not depleted in any way, they are infinitely vast! Since God therefore created all things, He also transcends them, and *His power and dominion are infinitely greater than everything He created!* God is actively sustaining everything in creation, He exercises His power in every moment of time, being sure to bring to pass "all His good pleasure." He made all things with a very purposeful will, and He possesses the **power to execute** His divine will and bring His intentions to an expected end. He began alone, and created all things out of nothing, and by this great truth is known as "The Almighty."

Isaiah 40:26 - 26 Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; **Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power Not one of them is missing.** 28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? **The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth** Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. NASB

John 1:1-3 - :1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 **All things came into being by Him,** and **apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being** NAS

Colossians 1:16-17 - 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- **all things have been created by Him and for Him.** 17 And He is before all things, and **in Him all things hold together.** NAS

Because of this truth it also follows that any power that is in the creation is granted by God. If God made everything out of nothing, than nothing has power unless it has been delegated by God. In fact the **Scripture plainly declares** that God's power is far above all earthly powers.

Ephesians 1:19-21 - 19 and what is **the surpassing greatness of His power** toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion,** and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. NASB

Consider, if someone were more powerful than God, than they would have authority over Him, but this is in fact impossible. Therefore, because God is Omnipotent, He is also **SOVEREIGN**.

The Sovereignty of God

God's Nature

Omniscience

God knows everything. Because God is the source of all things, making everything from nothing, He is therefore the source of all knowledge and wisdom. Let us examine a definition of Omniscience to try and understand how complete God's Knowledge is...AW Tozer writes....

"God knows all that can be known. And this He knows instantly and with a fullness of perfection that includes every possible item of knowledge concerning everything that exists or could have existed anywhere in the universe at any time in the past or that may exist in the centuries or ages yet unborn."

We could add to this that God knows all of the data of every possible cause and effect, feeling and desire, creature, event, and every other thing that can be named. His knowledge is complete and eternal. The **Scripture plainly declares** that God knows everything....

1 John 3:20 - 20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for **God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.** NASB

Isaiah 40:28 - 28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. **His understanding is inscrutable.** NASB

Psalms 147:5 - 5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in strength; **His understanding is infinite.** NASB

Rarely would someone argue that God does not know the past, but what about the future. Does God know the future? The **Scripture plainly declares** that God knows the record of the future, in fact the future is the outworking of God's decrees made from before He created the world. **He knew in eternity past the entire record of history for all eternity.** Predictive prophecy proves this again and again. God speaks about future events before they come to pass. Consider how many prophecies in the Bible have already been fulfilled!

Isaiah 46:9-10 - 9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 **Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done,** Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; NAS

Isaiah 44:7-8 - Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come-- yes, let him foretell what will come. 8 Do not tremble, do not be afraid. **Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago?** You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one." NASB

In Psalm 139 the Scripture speaks of God knowing our thoughts and words **"before there is a word on our tongue."**

Psalms 139:2-4 - 2 Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up; **Thou dost understand my thought from afar.** 3 Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down, And art intimately acquainted with all my ways. 4 **Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, Thou dost know it all.** NAS

There is nothing that escapes His notice, and nothing can be hidden from Him. He is aware of the events of the past, present, and future as if they were all laid out before Him. As His being is perfect, so is His knowledge. Being perfect in knowledge, He is therefore all-knowing and never confused, misled or surprised.

Hebrews 4:13 - 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but **all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him** with whom we have to do. NASB

Nothing escapes the attention of God. He see all things even the inner thoughts of man. Jesus said that "all of the hairs of our head were numbered," (Luke 12:7) and that not a sparrow falls to the ground apart from His attention (Matt 10:29). Our very thoughts and intentions of our hearts are **"open and laid bare before the Lord."** He knows our thoughts(Eze 11:5) before we even express them. Indeed there is no place where we can hide from God, He sees every hidden thing in full view, and **He even understands the intentions of our hearts better than we do. He is God!**

1 Kings 8:39- 39 then hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place, and forgive and act and render to each according to all his ways, whose heart Thou knowest, **for Thou alone dost know the hearts of all the sons of men.** NASB

1 Chronicles 28:9 - 9 "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; **for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts.** If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever. NA

Proverbs 5:21 - 21 For the **ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD,** And He watches all his paths. NASB

AW Pink writes of God's knowledge of our sins;

"Neither the darkness of night, the closest curtains, nor the deepest dungeon can hide any sinner from the eyes of Omniscience. The trees of the garden were not able to conceal our first parents. No human eye beheld Cain murder his brother, but his maker witnessed his crime! Sarah might laugh derisively in the seclusion of her tent, yet was it heard by Jehovah. Achan stole a wedge of gold and carefully hid it in the earth, but God brought it to light. David was at much pains to cover up his wickedness, but ere long the all-seeing God sent one of His servants to say to him, "You are the man!" And to writer and reader is also said, "Be sure your sin will find you out." (Numbers 32:23)

Proverbs 15:3 - The **eyes of the LORD are in every place,** Watching the evil and the good. NAS

Job 34:21-22 - 21 "For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, And He sees all his steps. 22 "**There is no darkness or deep shadow Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.** NASB

Psalms 90:8 - 8 Thou hast placed our iniquities before Thee, **Our secret sins in the light of Thy presence.** NASB

S Lewis Johnson summarizes God's knowledge like this.....

- **Intuitive** - God knows everything by default, His knowledge exists within Himself
- **Simultaneous** – God knows everything in one simple act, instantaneously, not gradually
- **Independent** – God knows everything apart from any learning, He cannot learn, because He knows all things from eternity, His knowledge comes from Himself
- **Distinct** – God knows everything clearly, without ambiguity, specifically not generally, absolute
- **Infallible** – God's knowledge is unfailing, certain, accurate in every detail
- **Immutable** – God's knowledge never changes because He learned a new fact, it is not subject to anything outside of Himself
- **Complete** – God's knowledge is infinite, the scope or extent of it is exhaustive, He knows all things actual and possible, all events, all creatures of the past, present and future

Consider how God's knowledge is related to His Sovereignty. If God be All-Knowing, than nothing can escape His attention or somehow surprise Him. He is intimately aware of everything at all times, knowing it all from before He ever created the world. God knows everything FREELY because He has willed them to be and has providentially brought them about.

Ephesians 1:11 - 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined **according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.** NASB

Summary - See chart on God's Knowledge and Power

The Sovereignty of God

God's Dominion

In Creation

Consider how God's authority is expressed in His creative works. Imagine the Wisdom of God in all the intricate details of the universe He has made! It is an amazing thing to consider how all the creative works of God exist in such perfect balance to speak a very loud word to us of God's Wisdom, Power and Beauty!

Psalm 19:1-6 - The heavens are **telling** of the glory of God; And their expanse is **declaring** the work of His hands. 2 Day to day **pours forth speech**. And night to night **reveals knowledge**. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And **their utterances to the end of the world**. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. 6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat. NASB

This Sovereignty of God in Creation can be seen in many ways. When God made the world out of nothing, **He created out of His own pleasure and will** and made the heavens and the earth in all of their varied array in exactly the way he was pleased to do it. Consider the following quote from AW Pink.....

"In the great expanse of eternity which stretches behind Genesis 1:1, the universe was unborn and creation existed only in the mind of the great Creator. In His Sovereign majesty God dwelt all alone. We refer to that far distant period before the heavens and the earth were created. There were then no angels to hymn God's praises, no creatures to occupy His notice, no rebels to be brought into subjection. The great God was all alone amid the awful Silence of His own vast universe. But even at that time, if time it could be called, God was Sovereign. He might create or not create according to His own good pleasure. He might create this way or that way; He might create one world or one million worlds, and who was there to resist His will? He might call into existence a million different creatures and place them on absolute equality, endowing them with the same faculties and placing them in the same environment; or, He might create a million creatures each differing from the others, and possessing nothing in common save their creaturehood, and who was there to challenge His right?..... Behold then the exercise of Divine Sovereignty long before man ever saw the light. With whom took God counsel in the creation and disposition of His creatures? See the birds as they fly through the air, the beasts as they roam the earth, the fishes as they swim in the sea, and then ask, Who was it that made them to differ? Was it not their Creator who Sovereignly assigned their various locations and adaptations to them!"

Whatever God did in creation, he did all alone and consulted no one in its vast design....

Isaiah 44:24 - 24 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, "**I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens by Myself, And spreading out the earth all alone,**" NASB

Consider that God has made everything so disproportionate, yet He holds it all in perfect balance! His authority is expressed in every aspect of His creation. Consider "**outer space**" for example...

1 Corinthians 15:40-41 - 40 There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; **for star differs from star in glory.** NASB

Or the earth.....

Proverbs 8:28-29 - 8 When He made firm the skies above, When the springs of the deep became fixed, 29 When **He set for the sea its boundary, So that the water should not transgress His command,** When He marked out the foundations of the earth; NASB

He is the one who endows His creatures with various powers as He see fit. Consider the germ or the ant, the elephant or the whale, or even mankind and angels. Behold with what Wisdom and Beauty God has fitted His creatures to have various powers and freedoms!

Genesis 1:20-23 - 20 Then God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens." 21 And **God created the great sea monsters, and**

every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." 23 And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day. NASB

Consider when God placed man upon the earth, the He Sovereignly did it as He saw fit, even determining the exact places where the nations would dwell and the specific time that they would occupy in the annals of History.....

Acts 17:24-27 - 24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. **26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.** NASB

Think with what **goodness** God has made His creation. The birds and bees, and the flowers and the trees, with what beauty He has graced the earth! And what about our bodies? How perfectly suited for our creative minds has He given us hands by which we can do our good pleasure. Or how about the flavor of your favorite meal, and even vittles to fill a hungry belly. Or the tingling rush of a hot fire on a cold winter's night, or the sweet butterfly kisses of precious young daughter! **Oh the magnificence of the goodness of God!** Volumes could not contain the expressions of the riches of His kindness to us! If we could spend a lifetime considering the loveliness of God's creation, **HOW MUCH MORE LOVELY IS THE ONE** from whom it all flows! How vast is the sum of His goodness? With what shall we respond to the Sovereign Majesty and Goodness of God? With simple gratitude and a heart of thanksgiving shall we acknowledge His wonderful goodness to us!

1 Timothy 4:4-5 - 4 **For everything created by God is good**, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; 5 for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. NASB

Now God has done all of these things with great purpose and intricate detail. The **Scripture plainly declares** that when God has finished with first creation, he will destroy it and replace it with another.....behold then the Supreme Authority of God and His creation.....Dear reader I ask you, does not the potter have a right over the clay?

Hebrews 1:10-12 - 10 And, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of Thy hands; 11 They will perish, but Thou remainest; And **they all will become old as a garment, 12 And as a mantle Thou wilt roll them up; As a garment they will also be changed.** But Thou art the same, And Thy years will not come to an end. " NASB

Isaiah 51:6 - "Lift up your eyes to the sky, Then look to the earth beneath; **For the sky will vanish like smoke, And the earth will wear out like a garment,** And its inhabitants will die in like manner, But My salvation shall be forever, And My righteousness shall not wane. NASB

Behold then that God creates and destroys and does as He sees fit in all the heavens and the earth. It is because of God's own will and pleasure that He created and that things exist.

Revelation 4:11 - "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; **for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.**" NASB

He is the Creator, the Owner, the Governor and none shall say to Him "What hast Thou done?"

Daniel 4:34-35 - For **His dominion is an everlasting dominion,** And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35 "And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But **He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand** Or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?' NASB

Another quote from AW Pink.....

"Learn then this basic truth, that the Creator is absolute Sovereign, executing His own will, performing His own pleasure, and considering nought but His own glory. "The LORD hath made all things FOR HIMSELF" (Prov. 16:4). And had He not a perfect right to? Since God is God, who dare challenge His prerogative? To murmur against Him is rank rebellion. To question His ways is to impugn His wisdom. To criticize Him is sin of the deepest dye. Have we forgotten who He is? Behold, "All nations before Him as are nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God?"(Isa. 40:17, 18)."

The Sovereignty of God

God's Dominion - In Providence

The Providence Of God Defined

Indeed the doctrine of God's Providence is one of the great mysteries of the Bible. However, it is found on almost every page of Scripture. In fact, Providence is assumed and implied constantly by biblical writers, as we shall see. So what does Providence mean, and how is it described in the Bible? The best definition that I have seen of God's Providence comes from Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology, it reads.....

“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.”

Now consider just how profound this statement really is....in so doing we will break it down and look at the biblical evidence of each of its parts. We will start with the first section, it is called **“Preservation”**

“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;

Here Providence is described as God's “continual involvement.” God has not left the world to spin of its own power, but He is constantly maintaining its activity by His own hand...

Hebrews 1:2-3 - 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, **through whom also He made the world.** 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and **upholds all things by the word of His power.** NASB

Here the Scripture says of God that He “upholds all things.” Could there be a more explicit statement of His “continual involvement?” Well, consider Colossians 1:17....

Colossians 1:16-17 - 16 For by Him all things were created, **both in the heavens and on earth,** visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- **all things have been created by Him and for Him.** 17 And He is before all things, and **in Him all things hold together.** NAS

Here the context of both the Hebrews and Colossians passages make it crystal clear that the scope of this **“Preservation”** is **“all of the created order of matter and beings.”** It would be wrong to think that God is somehow merely holding the planet in orbit, but not men and angels. This is continually affirmed in Scripture.....

Acts 17:28 - 28 **for in Him we live and move and exist.** NASB

Job 34:14-15 - 14 "If He should determine to do so, **If He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath,** 15 **All flesh would perish together, And man would return to dust.** NASB

Therefore, when we think about God's activity of Providence in His world, we should think of it as **“continual involvement.”** God is outside and separate and distinct from His creation, yet He is governing it by a mighty Providence. God is not somehow abstractly intervening in the events of History when He thinks its time to do something, but rather He is literally “the glue which holds it all together” and is constantly at work in the universe to hold everything together. God is not the creation(Pantheism), nor has God abandoned the creation to run by itself(Deism). Rather, God *“keeps them existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them.”*

The second section the is what we call **“Concurrence.”** It is stated as....

(2) cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do;

Here we are saying that God **“cooperates.”** God is not everything, but rather cooperates with everything. He is separate and distinct from everything and further is cooperating with the things He has made is such a way as to **“direct them.”** This is seen is so many places in the Bible that it

can hardly be mistaken. God is literally in control of Nature and History in such a way that He is involved in *“every action, directing”* them. Let us look at the testimony of Scripture.

God’s control of Nature

When we speak of God’s control of nature we are saying that He is in control of planetary movements, weather patterns, animals and people, angels and demons, and every creature He has made. At the command of God burst forth the great springs of the deep in the days of Noah. With His voice opened He the heavens to pour down rain for 40 days and nights. Tornado and tempest, lightning and thunder, winds and waves- each one the servant of God sent to do His bidding and performing all His good pleasure. There is not a maverick storm in all the ages that He did not command its every whim!

Job 37:1-13 - "At this also my heart trembles, And leaps from its place. 2 "Listen closely to the thunder of His voice, And the rumbling that goes out from His mouth. 3 "Under the whole heaven **He lets it loose, And His lightning to the ends of the earth.** 4 "After it, a voice roars; He thunders with His majestic voice; And He does not restrain the lightnings when His voice is heard. 5 "God thunders with His voice wondrously, Doing great things which we cannot comprehend. 6 "**For to the snow He says, 'Fall on the earth,' And to the downpour and the rain, 'Be strong.'** 7 "**He seals the hand of every man, That all men may know His work.** 8 "Then the beast goes into its lair, And remains in its den. 9 "Out of the south comes the storm, And out of the north the cold. 10 "**From the breath of God ice is made,** And the expanse of the waters is frozen. 11 "Also with moisture He loads the thick cloud; He disperses the cloud of His lightning. 12 "And it changes direction, turning around by His guidance, That it may do whatever He commands it On the face of the inhabited earth. 13 "**Whether for correction, or for His world, Or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen.** NASB

Psalm 135:6-7 - Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps. 7 **He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; Who makes lightnings for the rain; Who brings forth the wind from His treasuries.** NASB

Mark 4:38-41 - 38 And He Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" 39 And being aroused, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And **the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.** 40 And He said to them, "Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith?" 41 And they became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" NASB

Job 38:12-13 - 12 "Have you ever in your life **commanded the morning, And caused the dawn to know its place;** 13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, And the wicked be shaken out of it? NASB

Psalm 103:20 - 20 Bless the LORD, you His angels, Mighty in strength, **who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word!** NASB

God’s control of events in History

Not only does God control Nature, but because of this is *“in every action directing”* the events of History. The **Scripture plainly declares** that God is the primary cause behind everything that happens.

Lamentations 3:37-38 - 37 Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, **Unless the Lord has commanded it?** 38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth? NASB

Isaiah 45:7 - 7 The One forming light and creating darkness, **Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.** NASB

Consider the words of Jonathan Edwards on this matter...

“God decreed from all eternity all the evil that He ever does permit, because God’s permitting is God’s forbearing to act or to prevent. It can be made evident by reason that nothing can come to pass but what is the will and pleasure of God should come to pass.”

Now the fact that events are seen to be under the control of God is plainly evident in Scripture. In fact **this is the main theme of the whole Bible!** God is Providentially working His will in all things to accomplish His own purposes for the display of His own Glory, Name and Power!

Ephesians 1:9-11 - 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a **view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth.** In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined **according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.** NASB

Examples from the Old Testament

Many examples could be cited from the Old Testament, here are a few.....

- **The Creation Account** – Genesis chapters 1-2
- **The Flood** – Genesis chapters 6-8
- **The Confounding of the Languages** – Genesis chapter 11
- **The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah** – Genesis chapter 19
- **The Plagues of Egypt** – Exodus chapters 7-12
- **The Exodus, Red Sea, Manna, Water from the Rock** – Exodus chapters 14-17
- **Mt Sinai and the Giving of the Law** – Exodus chapters 19-20
- **Defeat of Sihon and Og** – Numbers chapter 21
- **Conquest of Canaan** – Joshua
- **Numerous interventions in Judges** – Judges
- **Defeat of Sennacherib and 185,000 Assyrians** – 2 Kings chapter 19

Now concerning the doctrine of “**Concurrence**”, remember that God....

(2) cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do;

See now from the above passages that the Old Testament is literally riddled with accounts of God’s constant “*directing of things to act as they do.*” The **Scripture plainly declares** that God controls the events of History to achieve His own purpose and will. Further, consider that....

God’s providence over the nations is explicitly taught in the Scripture.

Isaiah 40:22-25 - 22 It is He who sits above the vault of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. **23 He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. 24 Scarcely have they been planted, Scarcely have they been sown, Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, And the storm carries them away like stubble.** 25 "To whom then will you liken Me That I should be his equal?" says the Holy One. NASB

Job 12:16-22 - 16 "With Him are strength and sound wisdom, The misled and the misleader belong to Him. 17 "He makes counselors walk barefoot, And makes fools of judges. **18 "He loosens the bond of kings, And binds their loins with a girdle. 19 "He makes priests walk barefoot, And overthrows the secure ones.** 20 "He deprives the trusted ones of speech, And takes away the discernment of the elders. 21 "He pours contempt on nobles, And loosens the belt of the strong. 22 "He reveals mysteries from the darkness, And brings the deep darkness into light. NASB

Here is seen **God’s Providence over the economic and religious systems of the world....kings and priests....**God is seen to be Sovereign over the wise and the foolish, the strong and the weak....

Job 12:23-25 - 23 "**He makes the nations great, then destroys them; He enlarges the nations, then leads them away.** 24 "He deprives of intelligence the chiefs of the earth's people, And makes them wander in a pathless waste. 25 "They grope in darkness with no light, And He makes them stagger like a drunken man. NASB

Even the very spiritual darkness of the nations is said here to be God’s doing, as is also the case in Romans 11:32. Here we see also that when a nation becomes great and powerful, it is God’s doing. And when a nation is destroyed, it is God’s doing. This is an irrefutable reality.... **God is Sovereign over the nations of the earth!** They belong to Him and exist for His purposes and for the good pleasure of His will. This fact is clear from man places in the bible like **Psalm 22:28, 82:8 or 47:78** which says....

Psalms 47:7-8 - 7 For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with a skillful psalm. 8 **God reigns over the nations.** God sits on His holy throne. NASB

Note then that the **Old Testament plainly declares** that God providentially directs the outcome of the rise and fall of nations and explicitly teaches that God is constantly directing the affairs of the History of mankind.

Examples from the New Testament

Consider that the entire life and ministry of Jesus the Christ is a manifestation of God's Providence in the affairs of History. Examine just a few of the accounts in the gospels....

- **The Virgin Birth of Jesus the Christ** – Luke chapters 1-3
- **The Calming of the Raging Sea** – Matthew 8:26
- **The Lame Walk** – John chapter 5
- **The Blind See** – John chapter 9
- **The Dead Live Again** – John chapter 11
- **The Resurrection** – Matthew chapter 28

Many other examples of “Concurrence” could be cited from the New Testament, here are a few.....

- **The Coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost** – Acts chapter 2
- **Numerous Signs and Wonders done by the hand of the Apostles** – Acts
- **Peter's Deliverance from Prison** – Acts chapter 12
- **The Conversion and Calling of Saul of Tarsus** – Acts chapter 9
- **The Death of Herod** – Acts chapter 12
- **The Trumpet and Bowl Judgments** – Revelation chapters 7-11, 16
- **The Beast, False Prophet thrown into the Lake of Fire** – Revelation chapter 19

Further, think of how God mysteriously works in the free choices of men to accomplish His purposes. This “Concurrence” is most clearly seen in the passages in Acts.....

Acts 2:22-24 - 22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know — 23 **this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.** 24 "And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. NASB
Acts 4:27-28 - 27 "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 **to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.** NASB

Note then that the **New Testament plainly declares** and explicitly teaches that God is constantly directing the affairs of the History of mankind.

What about Evil? Does God cause Evil? Does God ordain evil?

Grudem wisely states..... *“If God does indeed cause, through his providential activity, everything that comes about in the world, then the question arises... “What is the relationship between God and evil in the world?” Does God actually cause the evil actions that people do? If he does, then is God not responsible for sin? We can begin by looking at several passages that affirm that God did, indeed, cause evil events to come about and evil deeds to be done. But we must remember that in all these passages it is very clear that”* ...and also the following.....

- Scripture **nowhere shows God as directly doing anything evil** but rather as bringing about evil deeds through the willing actions of moral creatures.
- Scripture **never blames God for evil** or shows God as taking pleasure in evil
- Scripture **never excuses human beings for the wrong they do.**

However we understand God's relationship to evil, we must **NEVER**.....

- come to the point where we **think that we are not responsible for the evil** that we do
- or that **God takes pleasure in evil** or is to be blamed for it.

“There are literally dozens of Scripture passages that say that God (indirectly) brought about some kind of evil. I have quoted such an extensive list (in the next few paragraphs) because Christians often are unaware of the extent of this forthright teaching in Scripture. Yet it must be

remembered that in all of these examples, the evil is actually done not by God but by people or demons who choose to do it.”

- **Genesis ch 37-45** ... A very clear example is found in the story of Joseph. Scripture clearly says that Joseph’s brothers were wrongly jealous of him (Gen. 37:11), hated him (Gen. 37:4, 5, 8), wanted to kill him (Gen. 37:20), and did wrong when they cast him into a pit (Gen. 37:24) and then sold him into slavery in Egypt (Gen. 37:28). Yet later Joseph could say to his brothers, “*God sent me before you to preserve life*” (Gen. 45:5), and “*You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today*” (Gen. 50:20). Here we have a combination of evil deeds brought about by sinful men who are rightly held accountable for their sin and the overriding providential control of God whereby God’s own purposes were accomplished. Both are clearly affirmed.
- **Exodus ch 4-14**... The story of the exodus from Egypt repeatedly affirms that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh: God says, “I will harden his heart” (Ex. 4:21), “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart” (Ex. 7:3), “the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh” (Ex. 9:12), “the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart” (Ex. 10:20, repeated in 10:27 and again in 11:10), “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart” (Ex. 14:4), and “the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (Ex. 14:8).
What was God’s purpose in this? Paul reflects on Exodus 9:16 and says, “For the scripture says to Pharaoh, “I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so **that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth**” (Rom. 9:17). Then Paul infers a general truth from this specific example: “So then he has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills” (Rom. 9:18). In fact, God also hardened the hearts of the Egyptian people so that they pursued Israel into the Red Sea: “I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen” (Ex. 14:17). This theme is repeated in Psalm 105:25: “He turned their hearts to hate his people.”
- **Joshua 11:20**... “For it was the LORD’s doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be utterly destroyed” (Josh. 11:20; see also Judg. 3:12; 9:23).
- **Judges 14:4**... And Samson’s demand to marry an unbelieving Philistine woman “was from the LORD; for he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel”
- **1 Samuel 2:25**... We also read that the sons of Eli, when rebuked for their evil deeds, “would not listen to the voice of their father; for it was the will of the LORD to slay them”
- **1 Samuel 16:14**... Later, “an evil spirit from the LORD” tormented King Saul
- **2 Samuel 24:1, 1 Chronicles 21:1**... Still later in David’s life, the Lord “incited” David to take a census of the people (2 Sam. 24:1), but afterward David recognized this as sin, saying, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done” (2 Sam. 24:10), and God sent punishment on the land because of this sin (2 Sam. 24:12–17). However, it is also clear that “the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel” (2 Sam. 24:1), so God’s inciting of David to sin was a means by which he brought about punishment on the people of Israel. Moreover, **the means by which God incited David is made clear in 1 Chronicles 21:1: “Satan stood up against Israel, and incited David to number Israel.**” In this one incident the Bible gives us a remarkable insight into the three influences that contributed in different ways to one action: God, in order to bring about his purposes, worked through Satan to incite David to sin, but Scripture regards David as being responsible for that sin.

In the story of **Job**, though **the LORD gave Satan permission** to bring harm to Job's possessions and children, and though this harm came through the evil actions of the Sabeans and the Chaldeans, as well as a windstorm (Job 1:12, 15, 17, 19), yet Job looks beyond those secondary causes and, with the eyes of faith, sees it all as from the hand of the Lord: "the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; *blessed be the name of the LORD*" (Job 1:21). The Old Testament author follows Job's statement immediately with the sentence, "In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong" (Job 1:22). Job has just been told that evil marauding bands had destroyed his flocks and herds, yet with great faith and patience in adversity, he says, "*The LORD has taken away.*" Though he says that the LORD had done this, yet he does not blame God for the evil or say that God had done wrong: he says, "Blessed be the name of the LORD." To *blame* God for evil that he had brought about through secondary agents would have been to sin. Job does not do this, Scripture never does this, and neither should we.

"Elsewhere in the Old Testament we read that **the Lord "put a lying spirit in the mouth" of Ahab's prophets** (1 Kings 22:23) and sent the wicked Assyrians as "the rod of my anger" to punish Israel (Isa. 10:5)."

"In many of the passages mentioned above, God brings evil and destruction on people in judgment upon their sins: They have been disobedient or have strayed into idolatry, and then the LORD uses the following to bring judgment on them..."

- **evil human beings**
- **demonic forces**
- **"natural" disasters**

"Therefore, when God brings evil on human beings, whether to discipline his children, or to lead unbelievers to repentance, or to bring a judgment of condemnation and destruction upon hardened sinners, none of us can charge God with doing wrong. Ultimately all will work in God's good purposes to bring glory to him and good to his people. Yet we must realize that in punishing evil in those who are not redeemed (such as Pharaoh, the Canaanites, and the Babylonians), God is also glorified through the demonstration of his justice, holiness, and power" (see Ex. 9:16; Rom. 9:14–24). End Grudem's commentary here.....

Distinctions in God's Will - Is everything that happens God's will?

As we have seen, God's will is seen as the final authority and the ultimate reason for everything that happens. God's "**permitting**" or "**preventing**" in Providence is the determining factor. But is everything that happens God's will? This can be a very puzzling question unless you make a distinction which is clearly seen in Scripture. The distinction is between God's Sovereign will and God's Moral will. Many times in Scripture we see that God's desire for our moral conduct is violated by the free choices of mankind, yet God does not prevent but rather permits this to occur. So then it is not His "**moral will**" that evil should take place, but in His "**Sovereign will**" He has permitted it to happen. We find out God's "**moral will**" by simply reading His "**precepts**" and "**commanded will**" about what we should do or how we should behave. We find out God's "**Sovereign will**" when events actually happen and the "**secret**" counsel of God is "**revealed**", the things He has planned and "**decreed**" from all eternity. So when we ask questions like, "Is it God's will for me to do this or that," we simply look to God's revelation in Scripture about what He desires for us to do. But when events actually occur, we see what the secret counsel of God's Sovereign will, what he has ordained and approved (what He has permitted or prevented to occur) as it is revealed in time and space. Therefore it is important when discussing these matters to

make a clear distinction in the **“will of God”** for the sake of properly understanding one another when we make statements about God’s will. See the table below on the **“Two Wills of God.”**

<h2 style="margin: 0;">The Two Wills of God</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">Deuteronomy 29:29 - "The <u>secret</u> things belong to the LORD our God, but the things <u>revealed</u> belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law. NASB</p>	
SOVEREIGN WILL	MORAL WILL
<p>Also called..... SECRET WILL WILL OF DECREE</p>	<p>Also called..... REVEALED WILL COMMANDED WILL WILL OF PRECEPT</p>
<p><i>God's Sovereign will includes God's hidden decrees by which He governs everything that happens. We find out God's Sovereign will when events actually happen.</i></p>	<p><i>God's moral will expresses God's general desire concerning things and usually contains God's commands about our moral conduct.</i></p>
<p>Ephesians 1:11 James 4:15 Genesis 50:20 Matthew 11:25-26 1 Corinthians 4:19 Acts 2:23, 4:28,21:14 Romans 1:10, 9:18, 15:32 1 Peter 3:17, 4:19</p>	<p>Exodus 20:1-17 Ephesians 5:17 Romans 2:18 1 John 5:14 Matthew 6:10, 7:21, 12:50, 18:14 1 Timothy 2:4 2 Peter 3:9 Ezekiel 33:11</p>

Examples of distinctions in God’s will are clearly seen in Scripture or in the world around us. Many times it is NOT God’s will(His moral will, His general desire) for evil to take place, but his **permitting and NOT preventing** obviously makes it His Sovereign will(His will of Decree or Secret will), that which He determined should happen from all Eternity. Consider the following.....

- **Genesis 50:20 – Joseph and his brothers**
Genesis 50:20 - 20 "And as for you, you meant evil against me, but **God meant it for good in order** to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. NASB
- **Acts 2:23 – The murder of Jesus**
Acts 2:23 - 23 this Man, delivered up **by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God,** you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. NASB
- **Genocide in War**
- **911- The Twin Towers**

In light of this knowledge, consider afresh the statement we looked at by Jonathan Edwards...
“God decreed from all eternity all the evil that He ever does permit, because God’s permitting is God’s forbearing to act or to prevent. It can be made evident by reason that nothing can come to pass but what is the will and pleasure of God should come to pass.”

Know then that the **Scripture plainly declares** a distinction in the will of God between His Sovereign(Secret or Decreed) and Moral(Commaned or Revealed) will.

Finally, we have come to the third part of our definition of Providence which is referred to as **“Governement”** - (3) *directs them to fulfill his purposes.*” Grudem further defines this third aspect in the following way....

“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.”

The **Scripture plainly declares** that everything that happens is happening ultimately under the Sovereign Authority of God as He **directs them** so that **in the end His purposes are fulfilled.**

Psalm 103:19 - 19 The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; And **His sovereignty rules over all.** NASB

Paul affirms that God works **“all things after the counsel of His will”** and to His **“ends.”**

Ephesians 1:11-12 - 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to **His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end** that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. NASB

Romans 8:28 - 28 And we know **that God causes all things to work together for good** to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. NASB

Romans 11:36 - 36 For **from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.** To Him be the glory forever. Amen. NASB

The **Scripture plainly declares** this same truth in the Old Testament.

Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 - 3 Consider the work of God, For **who is able to straighten what He has bent?** 14 In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider- **God has made the one as well as the other** So that man may not discover anything that will be after him. NASB

Daniel 4:34-35 - For **His dominion is an everlasting dominion,** And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35 "And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But **He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth;** And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?' NASB

Psalms 135:5-6 - 5 For I know that **the LORD is great, And that our Lord is above all gods. 6 Whatever the LORD pleases, He does.** In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps. NASB

And lastly, that **“all things”** have been placed by God the Father **“in subjection”** the Sovereign Authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son. The **Scripture plainly declares** that everything in the universe, seen and unseen, is under Christ’s personal dominion.

1 Corinthians 15:27 - 27 For **He has put all things in subjection under His feet.** But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. NASB

Ephesians 1:20-22 - 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far **above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named,** not only in this age, but also in the one to come. 22 And **He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things** to the church, NASB

Philippians 2:9-11 - 9 Therefore also **God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,** 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that **every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,** to the glory of God the Father. NASB

Summary

In summary we have seen that the **Bible clearly teaches** that God is Providentially implementing His Sovereign Rule over His entire creation and that He is directing Nature and History to fulfill His own purposes. His Providence is the greatest display of His Sovereignty(Authority) that exists. Dear reader, here now the word of the Lord!

Deuteronomy 4:39 - 39 Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, **that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.** NASB

One helpful thing to remember is the element of **“mystery”** in God’s Providence. Grudem wisely states.. **“What If We Cannot Understand This Doctrine Fully? Every believer who meditates on God’s providence will sooner or later come to a point where he or she will have to say, “I cannot understand this doctrine fully.” In some ways that must be said about every doctrine, since our understanding is finite, and God is infinite (see chapter 1, pp. 34–35; cf. p. 150). But particularly is this so with the doctrine of providence: we should believe it because Scripture teaches it even when we do not understand fully how it fits in with other teachings of Scripture.”**

Application

How do we apply this doctrine to our life and/or how does it affect us, our thinking and living?

We must recognize Him as Providential in our lives by.....

- Believing He is providential
- Appreciating His wise providential purposes and rule
- Being Thankful for God's good providence
- Never complaining against His providence disrespectfully
- Humbly submitting to His will
- Trusting in God's good promises to His people

Believing God is Providential

Dear reader, consider how you already believe in God's Providence. Is it not your assumption each time you pray for God's intervention in your life? Indeed it is, for when you bow the knee or head or heart to Almighty God, you first recognize His Sovereign Authority, then you consider how God has the power and right to change things, and lastly you make humble request for Him to do exactly that. Therefore we are to not only believe that God is Almighty and in control of all things, but our belief should find it rest in trusting God.

Isaiah 26:3-4 - "The **steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in Thee.**

4 "Trust in the LORD forever. For in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock. NASB

Proverbs 3:5-6 - 5 **Trust in the LORD with all your heart.** And do not lean on your own understanding.

6 **In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.** NASB

Appreciation of Providence

Dear reader, consider that God is highly exalted and has created us primarily for the purpose of worshipping Him and enjoying Him forever! As the Catechism's state.....

"The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever!"

More than this, all of the Law and the Prophets says Jesus, is summed up in the great commandment.....

Matthew 22:37-38 - **'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'** 38 "This is the great and foremost commandment. NASB

Shall we then love God and *not* love His Almighty rule over the world? Shall we adore Him with everything that is within us and *not* worship and magnify the astounding Wisdom of His providence in the world? May it never be! Consider what benefits befall us in God's providence. Thomas Watson wisely states.... *"Without this wise providence of God there would be anxiety and confusion in the whole world, just like an army when it is routed and scattered. The providence of God infuses comfort and virtue into everything we enjoy. Our clothes would not warm us, our food would not nourish us, without the special providence of God. And does not all this deserve your admiration of providence?"*

The understanding of God's providence should cause us to greatly magnify the honor of His name and worship Him with Holy fear and rejoice with trembling!

Psalm 96:9-13 - 9 **Worship the LORD in holy attire; Tremble before Him, all the earth. 10 Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns;** Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity." 11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; Let the sea roar, and all it contains; 12 Let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy 13 Before the LORD, for He is coming; For He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, And the peoples in His faithfulness. NASB

God rebukes those who do not adore His mighty providence.....

Jeremiah 5:22-23 – 22 **'Do you not fear Me?'** declares the LORD. **'Do you not tremble in My presence?'** For I have placed the sand as a boundary for the sea, An eternal decree, so it cannot cross over it. Though the waves toss, yet they cannot prevail; Though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it. 23'But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; They have turned aside and departed. NASB

And He commands us to tremble and praise Him because He is highly exalted!

Psalm 99:1-3 - **The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble** ; He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake! **2 The LORD is great in Zion, And He is exalted above all the peoples. 3 Let them praise Thy great and awesome name; Holy is He.** NASB

The understanding of God's providence is worthy of our admiration and praise. It has many glorious benefits upon our life and worship of God. Understanding Providence....

- Increases our gratitude to God
- Increases our trust in God
- Changes the way we view our world
- It helps understand that evil not outside of the control of God but that He is using it for the ultimate end of all of His good purposes.
- It causes to *rest in God's promises* as we consider *future events*, knowing that even if we faces dreadful suffering, that God will work it for our good. Romans 8:28
Psalm 23:3-4 - He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. **4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me;** Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. NASB
- It helps us to see that *God has an ultimate end in everything* that is happening and He will indeed destroy evil forever and we will lie down in peace.
Isaiah 11:9 - **They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain,** For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. NASB
- God's providence is the *foundation of Hope* because we are looking to that day of glorious rest and eternal happiness and bliss in God's Heaven.
Revelation 21:3-4 - **3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, 4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain;** the first things have passed away. " NASB

Oh Christian consider that His eye is on the sparrow and He watches over you! Yours is a special providence, being in the company of God's dearly beloved and chosen people!

Romans 8:28 - 28 And we know **that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.** NASB

Thomas Watson further teaches us....*"God's providence reaches to all persons, especially the persons of the godly, who in a special manner are taken notice of. God takes care of every saint in particular, as if he had none else to care for. 'He careth for you,' 1 Peter 5:7. i.e., the elect in a special manner. 'The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; to preserve them from death, and to keep them alive in famine.' Ps 33:18,19. God by his providential care shields off dangers from his people, and sets a life-guard of angels about them. Ps 34:7. God's providence keeps the very bones of the saints. Ps 34:20. It bottles their tears. Ps 56:8. It strengthens the saints in their weakness. Heb 11:34. It supplies all their wants out of its alms basket. Ps 23:5. Thus Providence wonderfully supplies the wants of the elect."*

Let us therefore appreciate God's providence to the point that we worship and magnify God's great name because of it, and seek to always acknowledge His "invisible hand" of guidance.

Submission to Providence

It is important then that we acknowledge God's good providence by humbly submitting to it. Are we happy that God is in control? Then let us also be happy with what He gives and also with what he takes away. Remember God's good promise to never allow us more than we can bear, but will bring us safely to His heaven....

1 Corinthians 10:13 - 13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and **God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able,** but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. NASB

2 Timothy 4:18 - 18 **The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom;** to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. NASB

1 Peter 1:3-5 - 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in

heaven for you, 5 **who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time. NASB

John 10:27-29 - 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and **I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.** 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." NASB

Consider the example of the saints who have gone before us. Even though they faced great trials, and the hand of Providence seemed to be against them at times, yet they trusted God and humbly submitted to His will. Watson quotes again... "*God is to be trusted when his providences seem to run contrary to his promises. God promised to give David the crown, to make him king; but providence ran contrary to his promise. David was pursued by Saul, and was in danger of his life, but all this while it was David's duty to trust God. Pray observe, that the Lord by cross providences often brings to pass his promise. God promised Paul the lives of all that were with him in the ship; but the providence of God seemed to run quite contrary to his promise, for the winds blew, the ship split and broke in pieces. Thus God fulfilled his promise; upon the broken pieces of the ship they all came safe to shore. Trust God when providences seem to run quite contrary to promises.*"

Abraham – Faithful to God trusting in God's promise to bless

Job – Job worshipped God in the midst of terrible suffering and pain at the hand of Providence.... "Even though He slay me yet will I praise Him."

Job 1:20-21 - 20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. **The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.**" NASB

Joseph – Faithful to God in the midst of terrible hardships and suffering.

Daniel – Faithful to God in the midst of great suffering and pagan culture and temptation.

Paul – Endured tremendous suffering and persecution yet persevered to the end

Never Complaining against Providence

Would you be content to rule the world on your own? Do you suppose you have a wiser plan than God? Would not God and His world be better off He you were at the helm? This is utter folly, and we all know it. Why then would we complain disrespectfully against God's wise providence? Shall the clay say to the potter, why did you make me like this? Shall the dog bite the hand that feeds it? If we raise complaint to God about the circumstances of our life, let us be sure to do it *seeking consolation and comfort*, and never speaking a cross word or in anger against God's Holy counsel, lest we find ourselves deeper into the pit of suffering. Consider the words of Thomas Watson.... "*Let us be content that God should rule the world; learn to acquiesce in his will, and submit to his providence. Does any affliction befall you? Remember God sees it is that which is fit for you, or it would not come.*"

Philippians 2:12-16 - 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. 14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing;** 15 that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, NASB

We must come to that place of humble submission to God where we realize He knows far better what we need than we do ourselves. The circumstances which God has ordered for our life are indeed that which works for our highest good and God's greatest glory!

Matthew 6:31-34 - 31 "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' 32 "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; **for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.** 34 "Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. NASB

Being Thankful for Providence

Dear friends, consider in the goodness of God to us, how we ought to be thankful! God has promised that every single thing in our lives will ultimately work for our good. Consider that if God would not spare His own Son, but gave Him for us, won't He then also give us everything we need?

Romans 8:31-32 - 31 What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who is against us?** 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, **how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?** NASB

If God will give His people a Kingdom when they die, will He not also give them daily bread while they live? If Jesus would suffer and die to bring me to Himself, will He not also hear my prayer when I cry to Him for help? Indeed He will, more than that, he will crown me with eternal life and grant me to see His glory forever more in His glorious Heaven, what more could I have from the good hand of Providence! Learn then, that it is fitting for the upright to praise God! Thanksgiving to God is pure praise! It is direct honor to God who gives us life and breathe!

Psalm 50:23 - **He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me;** And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God." NASB

For those who know the goodness of God, we have no other response but the high praises of our King! Thanksgiving is the blood that runs through the veins of a saint! Praise is the garment that fits handsomely on our backs!

Psalm 145:9-10 - 9 The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works. 10 **All Thy works shall give thanks to Thee, O LORD, And Thy godly ones shall bless Thee.** NASB

Consider that the mouth of the wicked is filled with grumblings and murmuring and complaining! But this is not fitting for a saint! The wicked cannot praise God, neither are they thankful. The poison of asps is on their lips, and with the tongue they profane the name of God!

Psalm 33:1-5 - **Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; Praise is becoming to the upright.** 2 Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings. 3 Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy. 4 For the word of the LORD is upright; And all His work is done in faithfulness. 5 He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD.

Let us therefore give God the thanksgiving and praise which is due to Him! That no matter what cup He gives us to drink, no matter what bitterness of soul should afflict us, no matter what great trial may befall us or try us, that we shall stand in the company of the saints, with the glorious praise of God in our mouth, knowing that He shall give us nothing but that which works for our good! It is God's will that we should give Him thanks in every circumstance!

1 Thessalonians 5:18 - 18 **in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you** in Christ Jesus. NASB

Ephesians 5:20 - 20 **always giving thanks for all things** in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; NASB

Trusting in God's Providence

When we consider the promises which God has made, we should be encouraged in our faith to rest in God's providence. God is in control, and we can rest knowing that He will bring about our good and His glory! Thomas Watson gives this encouragement.... *"Therefore, Christians, believe that God loves you, and that he will make the most cross providences to promote his glory and your good."* As the scripture says, God will care for us and meet our needs.

Psalm 37:3-7 - **Trust in the LORD, and do good;** Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. 5 **Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him,** and He will do it. 6 And He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your judgment as the noonday. 7 **Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him;** NASB

Jesus often says when confronting our fears, "Do not be afraid," and this is often followed by assurances of His presence with us. Indeed we have nothing to fear if we love God, everything will work for our *ultimate good*.

Luke 12:32 - 32 **"Do not be afraid** , little flock, **for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.** NASB

Consider God's Providence in you being saved? Consider how He brought you to Himself?

The Sovereignty of God

God's Purposes

The Display of His Glory and Excellence – The Ultimate End

God has many purposes for which He made the creation. Indeed everything He has made has a specific purpose to fulfill in the grand scheme of His plan for the ages. Everything has a very wonderful and awesome reason for existing, and all things ultimately work out into conformity with the purposes of God as we have seen. In fact everything that God does has its own purpose.

Proverbs 16:4 - 4 **The LORD has made everything for its own purpose**, Even the wicked for the day of evil. NASB

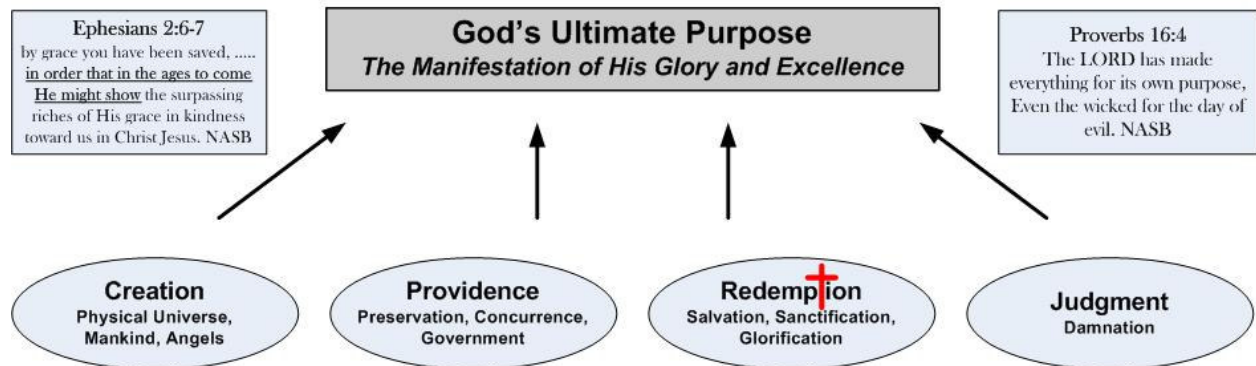
Consider these verses in Ephesians 1.....

Ephesians 1:11-12 - 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 **to the end** that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. NASB

In these verses, the salvation of the saints is seen to be *“predestined according to God’s purpose,”* but notice that this is not God’s highest purpose. Oh no, here it says that the predestination of salvation is *“to the end that we.....should be to the praise of His glory!”*

Learn then that the salvation of men is NOT God’s highest purpose, but it is works to the higher purpose of the *“praise of the glory of God!”* So when we ask the question, what is the **highest** purpose of God in creating all things, what do you suppose would be the answer? What purpose is it which makes all purposes subservient to it? What is the chief end for which God created all things? I think it can be most clearly summed up in the statement.....

“The chief end of God in the creation of all things is to manifest the Glory and Excellency of His own nature as God, and to express through creation, providence and redemption the manifold perfections of His divine character”



ALL PURPOSES OF GOD SERVE THE HIGHER PURPOSE OF THE DISPLAY OF HIS GLORY!

Dear reader, God is a being of such awesome wonder and infinitely profound beauty that the expression of His being is the highest and most glorious idea or concept that can be conceived. Further, the experience of **KNOWING GOD IN AN INTIMATE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP** is the most fulfilling and exhilarating reality that exists, and it is the highest purpose for which mankind was created. As the Westminster Catechism states, *“The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”* The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 10:31 - 31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or **whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.** NASB

Here the Apostle sums up all our human purposes, he says *“whatever you do.....do it all to the glory of God!”* Dear Reader, here we have purpose, here we have meaning!

This is in fact also what the Lord Himself taught us when He gave us the great commandments. He said all the Law and Prophets depend on these two commandments. In other words, you can sum up the entire Old Testament in this.....

Matthew 22:36-40 - 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."** 38 **"This is the great and foremost commandment.** 39 "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."
NASB

Here Jesus tells us the chief purpose for our existence. It is to **“love God”**, to worship Him with everything that is within us. Consider the meaning of worship, *“to ascribe worth or value to something”* in relation to God’s highest purpose. God seeks to manifest or show forth the Excellency of His character, and we are commanded to **“love Him and praise Him and revere Him.”** This is why sin is such an abominable failure on the part of mankind, because he thereby fails to glorify God, the highest purpose for which he was made and also the highest purpose God has for making Him. This is also why one sin is considered a violation of the whole law...

James 2:10 - 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and **yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.** NASB

God’s highest purpose is NOT the salvation of Mankind

Many people have the mistaken idea that God’s highest purpose is the salvation of men. This is a false idea and foreign to the Bible’s teaching. They reason that since we are created in God’s image and are therefore the pinnacle of God’s creative works, that for mankind to fall into damnation is the worst conceivable idea. But consider that God has ordained the fall of mankind from eternity, for His own Immutable purpose and by His eternal Decree. It was always His purpose for mankind to fall, so that he could redeem some to eternal life and others would be damned. You say, how can you be so sure these are God’s purposes? Well that’s easy, this is *“in fact what happens”* or to put it another way, it is God’s Sovereign will. It is what unfolds in the course of history therefore it is the outworking of the Sovereign Decree of God. Not only is this reasonably inferred by common sense, but the **Bible plainly states** that God is responsible for the fall....and has planned redemption from before the world began...

Romans 11:32 - 32 For **God has shut up all in disobedience** that He might show mercy to all. NASB

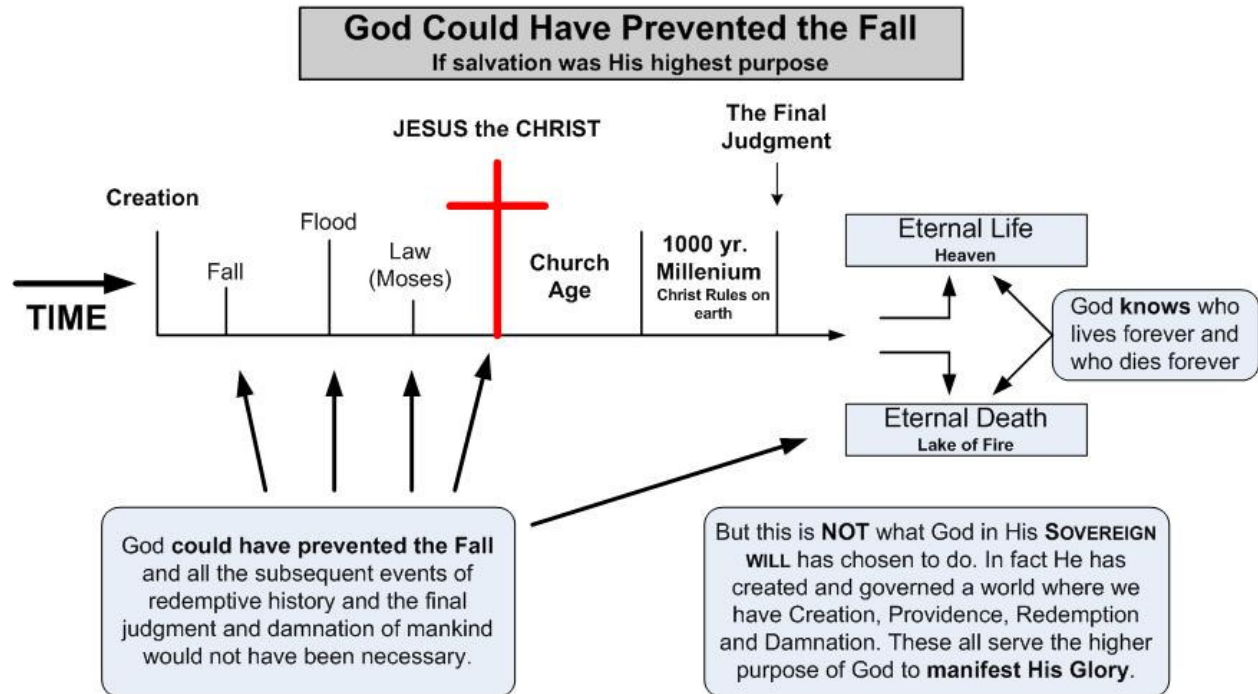
1 Peter 1:20-21 - 20 For He was **foreknown before the foundation of the world**, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you NASB

Many also claim that it is God’s will that all men be saved. In this they quote.....

1 Timothy 2:3-6 - 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 **who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time. NASB

Consider though that if it were God’s highest purpose to save all mankind, then that is exactly what God would do. Not only this, but God would not have shut all men up into disobedience if He desired to save them all but could have simply prevented the fall from happening. This He could have been done in many ways, not the least of which would be that He could have just NOT created the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or given a law not to eat from it. 1 Timothy 2:4 then, is just an expression of the **MORAL WILL** of God. God does not delight in the death of anyone(Eze 18:32), even hardened sinners. However, He will see to it that hardened sinners are judged and damned because this purpose displays the Excellency of His goodness, justice and wrath. So even though in His **MORAL WILL** He does not delight in the death of the wicked, in His **SOVEREIGN WILL** He will make sure it happens. God allows what He hates to accomplish what he loves. Consider the following quote from John Piper.... *“The misery and the suffering that judgment brings upon the impenitent, in and of itself, does not delight the heart of God. He is not malicious or bloodthirsty. That’s what Eze 18:32 is warning us NOT to believe about God. Rather, when He brings*

judgment on the impenitent and unbelieving and wicked, the delight that He takes in that act is delight in the vindication of His justice and His truth and righteousness, and the value of His name which has been profaned by unbelievers. God's heart is capable of grieving over the misery and the sin, considered in and of itself, of any unbelieving lost person (Eze 18:32), while at the same time rejoicing and exulting exuberantly in the vindication of His righteousness and His name as He destroys them in hell (Deut 28:63). If that does not fit together in your own mind and heart, you are finite and God is infinite, **do not shape God into your limited image**, let the Holy Scriptures stand, and may God build His true character in your heart and in your eyes."....from "The Pleasure of God in all He does" sermon Feb 1, 1987



God's Glory displayed in all things

Consider then, how God displays His Glory in all things. In the bullets below are listed a few of the Divine Excellencies which are seen in the works of God.

- **In the creation of the universe** – Power, Wisdom, Beauty, Perfection
- **In providence** - Power, Wisdom, Grace, Mercy, Patience, Omnipresence
- **In the salvation of His people** – Love, Grace, Mercy, Goodness, Justice
- **In the damnation of the wicked** - Goodness, Justice, Wrath, Power

Dear reader, when you consider the Almighty power and Wisdom of God, the proper response is worship and awe! Surely we see then that the **Scripture plainly teaches** that **“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.”** That God is indeed the beginning, the middle and the end of all that He has purposed to do.

Romans 11:33-36 - 33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? 35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? 36 **For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.** To Him be the glory forever. Amen.
NASB

There are actually numerous biblical texts which explicitly state that God seeks His own glory. In fact, there are so many, it would be exhausting just to list them all much less examine them. But here are a few.....

Isaiah 48:9-11 - "**For the sake of My name** I delay My wrath, And **for My praise** I restrain it for you, In order not to cut you off. 10 "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of

affliction. 11 "For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another. NASB

Isaiah 43:7 - Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made. " NASB

Jeremiah 13:11 - 11'For as the waistband clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole household of Israel and the whole household of Judah cling to Me,' declares the LORD,' that they might be for Me a people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they did not listen. NASB

Psalms 106:7-8 - Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Thy wonders; They did not remember Thine abundant kindnesses, But rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea. 8 Nevertheless He saved them for the sake of His name, That He might make His power known. NASB

Romans 9:17 - 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth." NASB

John 7:18-19 - 18 "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. NASB

Matthew 5:16 - 16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. NASB

John 12:27-29 - 27 "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. 28 "Father, glorify Thy name." There came therefore a voice out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." NASB

John 17:24 - 24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world. NASB

1 Peter 4:11 - 11 Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. NASB

Learn then, the Bible plainly declares that chief among the purposes of God is the pursuit of His own glory and the fame of His great name!

The Plan of Redemption, the Gospel and Missions

Consider then how God, in His infinite Wisdom, has planned the outworking of History to achieve this great end of displaying the Glory of His Name! As we look at Scripture we see that even from the earliest sections of Scripture, God is speaking of His plan to "save and redeem".

Genesis 3:15 - 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel. " NASB

We see over and over how God is working out His plan for the ages. Consider how the Scripture plainly teaches that it was always God's plan for mankind to Fall, for Jesus to die upon the Cross, and for God to redeem for Himself a company of people whom He has "destined for Glory." Many of the events were said to have been "predestined according to God's purpose" and done by the "predetermined plan" of God. The Bible is replete with such texts!

Ephesians 1:11-12 - 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. NASB

Acts 2:23 - 23 this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. NASB

Acts 4:27-28 - 27 "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur. NASB

Ephesians 1:3-6 - 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. NASB

Ephesians 3:11-13 - 11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. NASB

Titus 1:1-2 - 1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, 2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, NASB