Proverbs 8:28-29: When He made firm the skies above, When the springs of the deep became fixed, 29When 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; God 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. With what power, wisdom and beauty God has fitted His creatures with various powers and freedoms!

Genesis 1:20-23: 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.” 21And 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. 22And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” 23And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

When God placed man upon the earth, He did it sovereignly – as He saw fit. He determined the exact places where the nations would dwell and the specific times they would occupy in the annals of history.

Acts 17:24-26: The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation,

With what goodness God has made His creation! He has graced the earth with birds and bees, flowers and the trees! And what about our bodies? They are perfectly paired with our creative minds, enabling us to do what we will. How delightful to contemplate the rich flavors of our favorite meal or to simply appreciate plain old vittles to fill our hungry bellies. How we enjoy the tingling rush of a hot fire on a cold winter’s night or the sweet butterfly kisses of a precious young daughter! Oh the magnificence of the goodness of God! How many large volumes would it take to describe the riches of His kindness to us? We could spend a lifetime considering the loveliness of God’s creation – but how much more lovely is the One from whom it all flows! How vast is the sum of His goodness? How 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: For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

God does everything with specific intention and intricate detail. The Scripture plainly declares that when God’s purpose for the first creation is fulfilled, He will destroy it and create another. He clearly exercises supreme authority over what He has made. Does not the potter have a right over the clay?

Hebrews 1:10-12: And, “Thou, LORD, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of Thy hands; 11They will perish, but Thou remainest; And they all will become old as a garment, 12And 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.”

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.
God creates and destroys and does as He sees fit in the heavens and the earth. Everything that exists was created by God’s own will and for His own pleasure.

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.”

He is the Creator, the Owner, the Governor of all, and none shall say to Him “What hast Thou done?” No one can question His actions or purposes or resists His will successfully.

Daniel 4:34b-35: 34For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35And 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?’

Another quote from A.W. 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?” (Isaiah 40:17, 18).”

Question #21: How do the following Scripture passages specifically testify of God’s sovereignty in creation:

Psalm 19:1-6:

Isaiah 44:24:

1 Corinthians 15:40-41:

Proverbs 8:28-29:

Genesis 1:20-23:

Acts 17:24-27:

Question #22: How are you personally touched by God’s goodness as you consider His creation?

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Question #23: How do Hebrews 1:10-12, Isaiah 51:6, Revelation 4:11, and Daniel 4:34-35 reflect God’s sovereign right to exercise supreme authority over what He has made?

Question #24: Carefully reread the two quotes by A. W. Pink in this section. In what ways do his words deepen your awe and reverence of God?

In what ways do his words convict you of sinful attitudes or behavior?
The Sovereignty of God
Part 2: God’s Dominion – In Providence

The Providence Of God Defined
Although the doctrine of God’s providence is one of the great mysteries of the Bible, it is found on almost every page of Scripture. It is, in fact, constantly assumed and implied by the biblical writers. So what does “God’s providence” mean, and how is it described in the Bible? Wayne Grudem provides an excellent definition in his textbook entitled, Systematic Theology:

“God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that he (1) Preservation - keeps them existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them; (2) Concurrence - cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do; and (3) Government - directs them to fulfill his purposes.”

This is a profound statement we should consider carefully. Let’s begin by looking at the biblical evidence for each of its parts (which he has called preservation, concurrence, and government.)

Question #25: Look up the words preservation, concurrence, and government in an English dictionary and write them out:
Preservation: 

Concurrence: 

Government: 

Question #26: Do the definitions of these words help you understand any parts of Grudem’s definition? If so, explain.

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. God’s providence includes His continual involvement with all created things. God has not left the world to spin of its own power but is constantly maintaining its activity by His own hand.

Hebrews 1:1-3: God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He

9 The Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus (2003) lists the following synonyms for preservation: upkeep, maintenance, care, conservation, retention, perpetuation, continuation, safekeeping, safeguarding, protection
appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 7 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.

Here the Scripture says of God that He “upholds all things.” Could there be a clearer statement of His “continual involvement?” 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.

These Scriptures, understood in their immediate context, affirm that God is not merely holding the planets in orbit, but that He also created and preserves people and angels.

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

When we think about God’s providence over His world, we should think of it as continual involvement. God is separate and distinct from His creation, yet He is governing it by His mighty power. God does not simply intervene occasionally in the events of history when He thinks it is appropriate. He is the glue that holds it all together and the motor that keep it all moving. Without His constant work, the universe would disintegrate. God is not the creation (as is taught by Pantheism), nor has God abandoned His creation to run by itself (as is taught by Deism). Rather, as Wayne Grudem rightly teaches from Scripture, God “keeps them existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them.”

Question #27: Reread the Scripture passages quoted above. What specific words or phrases describe God’s continual involvement with His creation in ways that preserve it?

Question #28: In what specific ways does knowledge of this aspect of God’s sovereignty encourage and comfort you?

Concurrence: God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that he . . . (2) cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do. Here we see that although God is separate and distinct from everything He has made, He oversees everything He has made in a directive way. In theological terms, this is called concurrence. When we use this term, we are referring to God’s ultimate control over nature and history. This idea is supported by the testimony of Scripture.

God’s Control of Nature
When we speak of God’s control of nature, we are referring to His control of planetary movements, weather patterns, animals, people, angels, and demons – in other words, everything.

10 Grudem, 315.
He has made. At God’s command, the great springs of the deep burst forth in the days of Noah. His voice opened the heavens and ordered rain to pour down for forty days and nights. Tornados and tempests, lightning and thunder, winds and waves … all are God’s servants sent to do His bidding and perform all His good pleasure. No maverick storm has ever raged through God’s creation outside of God’s ruling hand of Providence!

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

Psalm 135:6-7: ⁶Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps. 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.

Mark 4:38-41: ³⁸And 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?” ³⁹And being aroused, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. ⁴⁰And He said to them, “Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith?” ⁴¹And they became very much afraid and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

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

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

Question #29: From the Scriptures quoted above, list specific words (verbs) that describe God’s and Jesus’s involvement with nature.

Question #30: In each case, what happened as a result of God and Jesus’s involvement?

Question #31: According to Psalm 103:20, how do angels relate to God?