The Sovereignty of God
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Part 5: Our Response to God’s Sovereignty
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Note: All Scripture references are from the NASB (1977) unless otherwise noted.
Ephesians 1:11-12: 11also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. 

Romans 8:28: 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. 

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

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

Ecclesiastes 7:13-14: 13Consider the work of God, For who is able to straighten what He has bent? 14In 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.

Daniel 4:34-35: 34But at the end of that period I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For 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?”

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

The Scripture plainly declares that everything in the universe, seen and unseen, is under the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son.

1 Corinthians 15:27: 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.

Ephesians 1:19b-22: 19bThese are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21far 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. 22And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

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

Question #44: Based on your reading of the above Scriptures, describe in your own words the effectiveness of God’s providential governing of His creation.

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Question #45: Based on your reading of the above Scriptures, how do you think God’s government of His creation relates to human governments?

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Summary
We have seen that the Bible clearly teaches that: 1) God providentially implements His sovereign rule over all of creation; and 2) He is directing nature and history to fulfill His own purposes. His Providence displays His sovereign authority in clear and unmistakable ways. Dear reader, hear now the word of the Lord!

Deuteronomy 4:39: 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.
As we struggle in our human frailty to understand the profound truth of God’s providence Wayne Grudem helpfully reminds us to bow in humility before its great mystery: “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 . . . . 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.”15

Question #46: Are you willing to bow in humility before the great mystery of God’s providence and believe it while frankly admitting that you cannot understand it fully?

Application
Applying this doctrine in our lives so that it impacts our thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions requires us to:

- Believe God is providential
- Appreciate God’s wise providential purposes and rule
- Humbly submit to God’s will
- Never complain against God’s providence
- Be thankful for God’s providence
- Trust in God’s good promises to His people

Believe God is providential
Chances are good you believe in God’s providence, whether you realize it or not. Is this not your assumption each time you pray for God’s intervention in your life? Indeed it is! When you bow your knee, head, or heart to Almighty God, you acknowledge His sovereign authority (His right and power) to change things even as you humbly request that He do so. Your prayer reflects your belief that God is almighty and in control of all things as you rest in trusting God.

Isaiah 26:3-4: 3 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.
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.

15 Grudem, 336.
Appreciate His wise providential purposes and rule

How wonderful it is to consider that our highly exalted God has created us for the purpose of worshipping Him and enjoying Him forever! As the Westminster Shorter Catechism states, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” This statement clearly reflects the great and foremost commandment given to us by Jesus.

Matthew 22:37-38: 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.”

How can we love God and not love His almighty rule over the world? How can we adore Him with everything that is within us and not worship and magnify the astounding wisdom displayed in His providential control over the world? We can only rejoice and give thanks for the great benefits we have in God’s providence! Thomas Watson expressed it well: “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?”

Rightly understanding God’s providence drives us to exalt the honor of His name as we worship Him with holy fear and rejoicing!

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.

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.”

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

Psalm 99:1-3: 1 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.

God’s providence is worthy of our admiration and praise. Rightly understanding it benefits us while intensifying our worship of God in many ways, including the following.

- Increases our gratitude to God
  Psalm 75:1: We give thanks to Thee, O God, we give thanks, For Thy name is near; Men declare Thy wondrous works.