

Theology 1
God's Providence
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4/12/23

*By providence we mean the continuing action of God by which He **preserves** in existence the creation which He has brought into being and **guides** it to His intended purposes for it.*

"He's got the whole world in His hands, He's got the whole wide world in His hands, He's got the whole world in His hands, He's got the whole world in His hands."

Providence as Preservation

- The Bible emphatically states God's preservation of **all things**: Nehemiah 9:6, Col. 1:17, Heb. 1:3, Psalm 104
- God's hand of preservation is especially noticeable among His people **Israel** – preserved in the midst of slavery, exodus, conquest, deportation, etc. (see Rev. 7)
- God provides special preservation to **His children**: John 10:27-30, Rom. 8:35-39
- The believer is **not spared** from danger or trial, but is **preserved** within it!
- Biblical preservation excludes two main misconceptions about God – the god of deism and God as celestial repairman.

Providence as Government

- By the government of God, we mean His activity in the universe so that all its events **fulfill His plan** for it.
- God governs the **entire** natural order. Psalm 104:21-29 even demonstrates His government over animals. He governs the hearts of kings (Dan. 2:21) and often uses pagan people for His purposes (Dan. 4:24-25). Just consider how God used the Egyptians, Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Greeks, & Romans.
- God is sovereign even in the "**accidental occurrences**" of life: *"The lot is cast in the lap, but the decision is wholly from the Lord"* (Prov. 16:33, cf. Acts 1:23-26).
- God's governmental providence even extends over the realm of sin. This is most noticeable in the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 2:23).

The Relationship Between God's Governing Activity and Sin

1. God can prevent sin. (Psalm 19:13, "deliver us from evil")
2. At times God permits sin. (Psalm 81:12-13, Rom. 1:24, 26, 28)
3. God can also direct sin, using it for the purposes of His glory. (Joseph – Gen. 50:20)
4. God can limit sin. (Matt. 24:22)

God's Providence in Prayer & Miracles

- Some have surmised that prayer is unnecessary because God is sovereign. Not only did God command us to pray, but prayer is the means thru which He accomplishes His ends.
- Miracles are occurrences where God counters natural force with His supernatural force.