

God and His Ways

Some of our early American leaders held to a belief called *deism*. They claimed that God created the world but then stepped back and let it operate without supernatural intervention. They thought of God as a cosmic watchmaker, who crafted the universe, wound it up, and then left it to run according to His design. But the Bible clearly teaches that God is sovereign, that He exercises supreme and permanent authority over His world.

God's Work of Providence

Theologians have identified two particular manifestations of God's providence: *preservation* and *government*.

Divine Preservation

God's *preservation* refers to His continuing work of _____ all that He has created.

<i>Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.</i> Nehemiah 9:6 KJV	<i>You alone are the LORD, You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. You gave life to all of them And the heavenly host bows down before You.</i> Nehemiah 9:6 NASB
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Psalm 104 testifies as to how explicitly the direct activity of God is tied to "natural" processes in creation. (vs. 26 – *Leviathan*. Here a sea monster.)

Question. Where did your last breath come from?

Answer. According to the unambiguous, repeated insistence of the Bible, it came from God. (Genesis 2:7; Deut. 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6; Job 12:10, 27:3, 33:4, 34:14-15; Daniel 5:23; Acts 17:24-25)

When we feel we have no strength to continue bearing our burdens, the thought of God's preserving work can refresh our spirits. (Phil. 4:19)

Divine Government

God directs the entire universe to the conclusion that He has purposed for it.

- God rules over all events in _____. (Psalm 135:6-7) From the ebbing of the tides to the death of each sparrow, God is the ruler over the natural world.
- God's sovereign rule includes the rise and fall of nations of the earth.

- The choices of individuals are also included in God's rule.

Truth or Error (pg. 48) – The quotation is true. Throughout Scripture, God affirms three truths that we are not able to reconcile: (1) evil does exist; (2) God is omnipotent; and (3) God is good. We are not in a position to judge the ways of God. By choosing to trust God when we do not understand His ways, we demonstrate that we are truly His disciples.

In Romans 9 & 10, Paul asserts a three point *paradox* that logic cannot reconcile but that faith must embrace: (1) God is completely sovereign (9:15-18); (2) man is responsible for his choices (9:31-33, 10:13-21); and (3) God is just (9:14).

We should not pity the wicked who refuse to repent. God has been more than fair with the unrepentant (Rom. 9:30-10:21). Those who perish do so not because God has refused their pleas for mercy. They perish because they desire to remain in _____ to God.

Miracles

At times, God works not through nature but in spite of it. This special providence that interrupts the usual patterns of nature is called a *miracle*.

God does miracles:

- 1) to meet human needs.
- 2) to verify that an accompanying revelation is true and divine in its origin.

There is no biblical evidence that God will not work a miracle today to relieve suffering or to verify His presence and work in the world.

- Though in God's good and all-wise providence the miracle of healing may not be ours, the miracle of resurrection is certain for all believers.

Conclusion

A *miracle* is God's **overt** activity in the world. *Providence* may be described as God's **covert** activity in orchestrating the affairs of men and the events of history. To use some biblical examples, Genesis 37-50 (the story of Joseph) emphasizes God's providence. The Gospel of John, on the other hand, emphasizes God's miraculous work.

Many difficult turns in the road are ahead for each of us. We must remember that His wise and gracious hand has ordered every step of the way.

- What lies before us is the _____ path to the _____ end.

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Reference

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Fill in the Blanks

sustaining

nature

rebellion

best (2 places)