

God Revealed — Sovereignty / Providence

God's absolute sovereignty, providence, and grace is basic to biblical doctrine. Every revelation of God shows Him with absolute authority ruling on His throne. The LORD God Almighty reigns in power and has absolute dominion over all things. Providence relates to God's plan and interaction with all of His creation. Divine providence is associated with the sovereignty, foreknowledge, and will of God.

As the Creator, God's will and power is the cause or source of all things. He has absolute authority over all things, upholds all things with His almighty power, and determines the ends of all things. Providence essentially means God's foresight or provision beforehand and is directly related to His sovereign and absolute control of all things. Both of these are essential parts of His divine being and the exercise of His nature. It is inconceivable that God would indeed be the Almighty Creator if He was not in control of His creation and all events related to it. Scriptural evidence of God's sovereignty is significant and here are a few of the significant passages:

(Genesis 14:19; Exodus 18:11; Deuteronomy 10:14, 17; 1 Chronicles 29:11, 12; 2 Chronicles 20:6; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalms 22:28; 47:2, 3, 7, 8; 50:10–12; 95:3–5; 115:3; 135:5, 6; 145:11–13; Jeremiah 27:5; Luke 1:53; Acts 17:24–26; Revelation 19:6)

Consider the power of His word in how the holy and transcendent God created all things.

His holiness refers to God being separate, above and beyond all things. Transcendent indicates that God is beyond and above and is not subject to the limitations of the material universe or His creations. His power (omnipotence) is related to the Lord's knowledge (omniscience) and presence (omnipresence).

It is impossible for the LORD GOD to achieve the creation of all things without the exercise of His sovereignty and providence. Since God is eternal in being and knows all things (omniscience), the exercise of His sovereignty and providence is not inconceivable. When we survey the various attributes of God's nature, it becomes obvious that the LORD our God is far above His creation in every aspect of His being and work. As we consider His sovereignty and providence, we rejoice in the fact that the LORD our God is watching over His creation and is especially attentive to His saints.

Romans 8:28 NKJV And we know that all things work together for good to

those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

The only way this can be true is if God is sovereignly and providentially in control. In all of His power, wisdom, and presence, God is watching over us with loving kindness and tender mercies.

Psalms 33:18-19 NLT But the Lord watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love. He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine.

Numerous biblical passages describe God's oversight and providential care.

Proverbs 5:21 NKJV For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He ponders all his paths.

Proverbs 15:3 NKJV The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

Psalms 34:15 NKJV The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.

2 Chronicles 16:9 NKJV For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.

1 Peter 3:12 NKJV For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

God's sovereign control is the framework of His interaction with creation. When the Psalmist said, "*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,*" he was referring to God's providential care over His people.

Jesus gave a clear picture of the Father's care.

Matthew 10:29-30 NKJV Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Matthew 6:26-31 NKJV Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"

Jehovah God has been in control from before the beginning of creation.

Think about the implications of His care and control. Once again, it is impossible to have the creation of all things without God's sovereignty and providence. He not only spoke everything into being with His word —everything keeps going because of Him.

Colossians 1:16-17 NKJV For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

The word “*consist*” means “*to bring together or hold together something in its proper or appropriate place, to hold together.*” Without God's sovereignty, providence, and power, all things would fall apart.

Everything about the success of your life is dependent on God's interaction with His creation. We believe that all things in heaven and earth and in all creation are sustained and governed by the providence of the eternal and omnipotent God. In the beginning when God said, “*Let there be...*” His Word incorporated His sovereign power and divine providence. With wisdom and knowledge, God is in control. We see this in every area of the universe.

Consider God's sovereignty and providence in relation to the events of your life.

Under God's providence, Paul was arrested and taken to Rome, where God had promised he would testify for Christ. On the way to Rome, their ship was caught in a severe storm. All hope that they would be saved was lost, but an angel of God assured Paul, “*Do not be afraid, you must be brought before Caesar, and indeed God has given you all those who are sailing with you.*”

We must hold on to God's promises in the midst of our storm and not allow fear and distress to take us down.

On the fourteenth day of the storm, their ship was broken in pieces, but all 276 souls escaped safely to land, (Acts 27). It is important to know that we are not cast upon fate or luck for the Lord our God is in control.

The Lord our God presides over all things.

Watch this throughout the Bible.

- Noah was safe in the ark since God was in control.
- Before Abram and Sarai had a child, God informed him of His plan to

bless him and his descendants. Hundreds of years before it happened, God told Abram that his descendants would be strangers in a land that was not theirs. God said they would serve them and would be afflicted for four hundred years, and then God would judge the nation they served and His people would come out with great possessions, (Genesis 15:12). Joseph's dream, slavery, and prominence in Egypt was God's providence to deliver Israel from Egypt, (Genesis 37-47).

The plan that God showed Abram was carried out through individuals God appointed and called.

- Moses was saved from certain death in the Nile River, because God is in control. The Exodus, travels across the Red Sea and the wilderness were achieved by God's providence.
- When King Saul rejected God, the LORD chose David, anointed him to be king, and protected him from Saul's relentless murderous attempts, (1 Samuel 19-31).

God chose leaders like Moses, Joshua, Saul, and David. He sent prophets like Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. He called and anointed judges over Israel who led God's people into victories over their enemies. During all of this, God sent His angels to minister, assist and take charge of His people, (Psalms 91:11). Repeatedly, God rescued and delivered His people from certain annihilation and the plans of the wicked.

The New Testament demonstrates the loving providence and sovereign power of God's care in providing a Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christ's incarnation was a manifestation of God's intervention and interaction with His creation to rescue it from sin and restore people to Himself. God's love appears in every detail of Christ's birth, life, ministry and death. Messianic prophecies foretold what would happen and in God's sovereignty and providence everything came to pass. In her old age, Elizabeth was told that she would have a child and that her son John would make ready a people prepared for the Lord, (Luke 1:11-25). God's providential love and care was demonstrated in the pregnancies of both Elizabeth and Mary. The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, His exile to Egypt, His life in Nazareth, anointing with the Holy Spirit, miracles, words and sacrificial death all show God's providential love and care, (John 3:16; Galatians 4:4).

Jesus testified of the fact that He was living, ministering and doing

miracles under the Father's assignment and care. He knew that no one would be able to stop the plans that God had made. His life, death, and resurrection were assured by God's providential care.

During His ministry, Jesus affirmed God's providential care when He spoke of how the Father values you.

Then He said, "even the hairs on your heads are numbered by God," (Matthew 10:29-31).

Our ultimate quest in life is for someone greater than we are to help us in our moments of crisis.

It is not enough to know that there is a God somewhere out there Who could help us. We can know that God will help us and that He is not distant, uncaring and unfeeling. The LORD God Almighty is in charge and we can go to Him and get the help we need for our times of trouble. The sovereignty and providence of God addresses all of our needs.

The word providence has a prefix, pro- which means "before" or "in front of," and the root of providence is "videre" which means, "to see."

Providence literally means "to see beforehand." God sees beforehand and is prepared for every contingency of your life. God's foreknowledge is different from His providence. Foreknowledge means the LORD can see everything before it begins, but providence indicates that God is involved in every detail of His universe. There is nothing more comforting than knowing that God in heaven not only knows all of our transgressions, weaknesses, and needs but has made provision so that we may be saved from our sins and be strengthened and helped. He is mindful of all of our tears, aches, and fears and we can fully trust Him in every aspect and phase of life.

Isaiah 26:3-4 NKJV You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, For in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength.

Psalms 62:8 NKJV Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah

Psalms 91:2 NKJV I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

Psalms 3:5 NKJV I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me. You can fully trust the Lord your GOD. The LORD JEHOVAH is not only watching you, He is a very present help in the time of your troubles.