

How does God's Divine Providence show grace through each dispensation, allowing mankind to see God's way of dispensing life and salvation for those who are obedient?

Theology I - GOD

Dr. Douglas C Stewart

The Doctrine of Divine Providence

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

- **Divine Providence**
- Objects of Divine Providence
- Relation of Divine Providence to the **Second Cause**
- Divine Concurrence in Good and Evil Actions
- Divine Providence and Free Will

DISCUSSION POINTS

- The limits on human life
- Man is bound in the realm of nature and of grace, to the means which God has appointed for his welfare
- How does God cooperate in evil actions that actually do occur?
- Acts of divine providence;
 - God's preservation
 - God's concurrence
 - God's government

THE LIMITS ON HUMAN LIFE: VIEWPOINT OF CONTINGENCY...	MAN IS BOUND IN THE REALM OF NATURE AND OF GRACE: VIEWPOINT OF CONTINGENTLY...	HOW DOES GOD COOPERATE IN EVIL ACTIONS THAT ACTUALLY DO OCCUR? DIVINE CONCURRENCE...	ACTS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE -INDIVIDUALS -NATIONS -PEOPLES OF THE FAITH -PEOPLE THAT TRUST
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1. **Divine providence** deals with God's plan in the earth and God's plan in your life. On a personal level, we see that it has to do with fulfillment of your destiny. God has a specific plan or destiny for your life and he works and orders things in your life to bring that destiny to fruition.
2. We also see that within the word providence is the word provide. When God moves you along, he supplies provision to help you reach the destination he has planned for you. To understand it fully, God has a specific purpose for your life and you trust him to bring to pass what he has purposed for you.

Exposition of Truth: The special object of divine providence according to scripture is the Church that Christ built, for whose sake all things exist and whose welfare all must serve. (See Romans 8:28; Heb. 1:14; Matt. 16:18.)

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

(Permissive providence) does God permit evil or suffers it to occur? God indeed permits, but does not will that which He permits.

As God has created the world, so He also sustain it and continually cares for all His creatures, particularly man. That is just what we mean when we speak of providence.

- “God is not a workman, who when he has completed his work, leaves it to itself and goes away.” (Augustine.)
- “God, the Creator of all, did not desert the work which He framed, but by His omnipotence up to the present time preserves it and by His wisdom He rules and controls all things in it.” (Gerhard.)
- The fact of divine providence may be known by men from the contemplation of nature, Rom. 1:19-20; Acts 14:17 and of history, Acts 17:26-28,
- Holy scripture, because of the blindness and perverseness of the human mind, Is. 1:2-3, teaches it with emphasis and much detail, Matt. 6:25-32.

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV)

Acts of divine providence manifest itself in particular:

- a) In His gracious preservation of all creatures; God's preservation, Ps. 36:6
- b) In His gracious cooperation with all that occurs; God's concurrence, Acts 17:28
- c) In His gracious direction and governance of the whole universe; God's governance, Jer. 10:23; Prov. 20:24

A complete definition of God's providence: "Divine providence is the external act of the entire Trinity".

- a) Most efficaciously upholds the things created both as an entirety and single, both in species and in individuals;
 - b) Concurs in their actions and effects;
 - c) And freely and wisely govern all things to His own glory and welfare and safety of the universe, especially of the godly.
- The acts of divine providence includes the preservation of all creatures not only in their being, Acts 17:28; Col. 1:17 but also in their activities, Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17; Ps. 104:10-30.
 - In other words, the creatures have not only their being in God, but also perform their functions through Him.

1. According to scripture divine providence embraces not only the universe in general, Col. 1:17 but also all creatures individually:
 - a) Plants; Matt. 6:28-30
 - b) Animals; Matt. 6:26
 - c) Men; Acts 17:26; Ps. 33:12-15

2. The special object of divine providence according to scripture is the Christian Church, for whose sake all things exist and whose welfare all must serve, Rom. 8:28; Heb. 1:14; Matt. 16:18.

In God's operating providence, He employs secondary causes or means by which He preserve and directs the things which He made. This is what we mean when we speak of divine concurrence.

- The relation of divine providence to such secondary means must be carefully noted; for in the divine act of concurrence both God works and the means work. However, the operation of the means is not coordinate with that of God, but rather subordinate to it, so that the secondary causes work only so far and so long as God works through them, Ps. 127:1.

With respect to the laws of nature, scripture teaches that they are not detached from the divine will, but are simply God's will exerted in the being and action of the creature in order that they may be preserved both in their existence and operation.

- Scripture acknowledges no immutable laws of nature apart from the divine will; for while they may be immutable to feeble man, they are not immutable to the omnipresent God, who by His almighty power governs all things according to His will, Ps. 115:3; 135:6.

Divine Concurrence in Good and Evil Actions

- With respect to the divine concurrence in the actions of moral agencies (men, angels) a distinction must be made between good and evil acts.
- With regards to evil acts, scripture teaches:
 - a) That God in His perfect holiness is so unalterably opposed to every evil work that He absolutely forbid and condemns it. (Decalog.)
 - b) That God frequently prevents evil acts from occurring, Gen. 20:6
 - c) That, whenever He permits them to happen He so controls them that they must serve His wise and holy purposes, Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28.

How does God cooperate in evil actions that actually do occur?

- On the one hand, we cannot say that these acts are done without God, for this would deny His divine concurrence (atheism); on the other hand, we must not ascribe to God these acts in so far as they are evil (pantheism).
- In other words, the divine concurrence makes God neither the author of nor an accomplice in evil acts.

- While it is true that God concurs in evil acts, He concurs in them in so far as they are acts, not in so far as they are evil. In reviewing Acts 17:25-28 we observe; men live, move, and have their being in God and receive life, breath and all things from Him, not only when they are do good, but also when they do evil.
- Scripture describes God's concurrence in evil actions also as permission (permissive providence). See Ps. 81:12; Acts 14:16; Rom. 1:28
 - a) Such permission is not kind indulgence, as though it did not offend God when men commit sin;
 - b) Nor a mitigation of the Law, as though God granted men license to sin under certain circumstances;
 - c) Nor a weakness in God or a defect of knowledge or power on His part as though He were ignorant of it or could not check it;
 - d) Nor indifference to sin, as though God were an unconcerned witness of it;
 - e) But a negative act, inasmuch as God does not place insuperable difficulties in the way of the sinner, but allows him to rush into iniquity, Matt. 26:33.

Although men live, move, and have their being in God, they remain free or self-determining, beings, who are personally responsible to God for whatever they do.

³² Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

Romans 1:32 (ESV)

- From the viewpoint of contingency, we must therefore say that the limit of human life is not absolutely and immutably decreed, Is. 38:5.
- All scripture passages that describe the terms contingency must be regarded as a gracious condescension on the part of God to our feeble understanding in order that we may use for our admonition or consolation the divine truths which He has graciously revealed for our temporal and eternal good.
- Nonetheless, even in cases where life is shorten or lengthen, God must not be regarded as mutable in His essence of decrees, since what appears to us as either shortening or lengthen of life has been decreed by him from eternity.
 - In other words, man dies exactly when God has willed that he should die, Luke 12:30; 2:26; Phil. 1:23-23; Judge 6:23; Ps. 90:3-10.

- In view of the fact that “with respect to man all things happens freely and contingently”, man is bound, both in the realm of nature and of grace, to the means which God has appointed for his welfare.
 - In bodily sickness he must apply medicine; for the sickness of the soul he must apply the means of grace.
 - Whenever God shortens the life of the wicked, this is to be regarded as a just punishment for their wickedness. Gen. 38:7-10.

Summarize the main topic of this slide show in **two** pages "Divine Providence" and provide an example of what you believe to be a divine providence. i.e. historical event, current event or something you witness.



Week 10 Summary

Thank You

Dr. Douglas C. Stewart

Stewartdc2@hotmail.com

(Facebook Live) Dr. Stewart Biblical Production
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www.360familyministries.com

