

The Doctrines of Grace

Doctrine 1-The Absolute Sovereignty of God

Part C/Lesson One of Three

Part C How Does God Manifest His Absolute Sovereignty Throughout His Creation?

Introduction

We have seen so far in this study that the Scriptures clearly teaches that God is Sovereign; that He is Absolutely Sovereign; that He is Absolutely Sovereign over everything; and that the one true living God of the Bible is Absolutely Sovereign over everything- all the time.

We have arrived at our conclusion that God is Absolutely Sovereign from the summation of what the Bible teaches about the Character and Nature of God. In **Part A**- we learned that God is:

- ✓ Spirit; Creator; and Owner (Lesson 1)
- ✓ Incomprehensible and Triune (Lesson 2)
- ✓ Omnipotent; Omniscient; and Omnipresent (Lesson 3)
- ✓ Immutable; Effectual; and Self- Existent (Lesson 4)
- ✓ Holy; Righteous; and Good (Lesson 5)
- ✓ Love; Faithful; and True (Lesson 6)
- ✓ Just and Merciful (Lesson 7)
- ✓ Savior and Judge (Lesson 8)

In the single Lesson of **Part B**- we looked at the overriding Principle that is behind everything that God says and does. We saw what the Bible teaches about the Great Passion that God has to be known and loved and adored and worshipped and enjoyed and obeyed and feared by His Creation, and that because of all that God is- we saw that this is only proper and correct. In Part B- we found out that the Bible teaches that there are three main ways in which this Great Passion of God is expressed- when God says:

- ✓ For My Glory!
- ✓ For My Name's Sake
- ✓ So that they will know that there is none like me in all the earth

So the next question that we need to explore in **Part C** is what does the Bible actually teach about how God manifests His Absolute Sovereignty throughout His Creation? In other words- in what ways does God make His Sovereignty known to his creatures?

Through this Section- we will find that the Scriptures declare that God manifests His Absolute Sovereignty throughout His Creation in three primary ways:

1. Through the Providential Governance and Order of the Universe (Lesson 1)
2. By the Imposition of Morality on Man (Lesson 2)
3. In the Distribution of Mercy (Lesson 3)

Let's look at each one.

1. God Manifests His Absolute Sovereignty Through the Providential Governance and Order of the Universe

Ephesians 1:11

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose (Plan/Will/ Design) of him (God) who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (clarification added)

God governs all of Creation in such a way that His Will is perfectly carried out and His Purposes are always accomplished.

Genesis 35:9-12

9 And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him.

10 And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.

11 And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;

12 And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

Isaiah 14:24-27

24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

26 This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

Ephesians 1:1-12

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Perhaps the most powerful and detailed account of just how God Sovereignly created and Sovereignly governs the Universe completely unattached or unencumbered and unadvised by Man is found in the discourse between God and Job:

Job 38:1-40:2

38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,

10 And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,

11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;

13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?

14 It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.

15 And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.

16 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

17 Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.

19 Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof,

20 That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?

21 Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?

22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,

23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?

24 By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?

25 Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder;

26 To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man;

27 To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?

28 Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?

29 Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?

30 The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.

31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?

35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?

36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?

37 Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven,

- 38** When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?
39 Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions,
40 When they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait?
41 Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

39:1 Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?

- 2** Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?
3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.
4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them.
5 Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?
6 Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings.
7 He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.
8 The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.
9 Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?
10 Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?
11 Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?
12 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?
13 Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?
14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust,
15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.
16 She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear;
17 Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.
18 What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.
19 Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?
20 Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.
21 He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.
22 He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.
23 The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.
24 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.
25 He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

- 26 Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?**
27 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?
28 She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.
29 From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.
30 Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.

40:1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said,

2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

After reading a passage like this- we can better understand King David's comment:

Psalms 8:3&4

- 3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;**
4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

The Providence of God

The word "Providence" is an amazing word. It comes from the word "provide" which has two parts: "*pro*" (Latin: "forward" or "on behalf of") and "*vide*" (Latin: "to see"). So on a shallow reading- many people think that "provide" would mean: *to see forward or to foresee*. But that isn't true at all.

"Pro-*vide*" (pro-veeday) actually means: *to supply what is needed; to give sustenance or support*. And so the noun "Providence" means: *the Sovereign Act of God in providing for or sustaining and governing the Universe*.

Now there are two reasons for this:

- A. Linguistic
- B. Theological

A. Linguistic

Linguistically, "pro" not only means: *forward*- but it also means: *on behalf of*. So the word, "pro-*vide*" actually means: *to see on behalf of*. But what sense does that make? The way this is used linguistically is that in English: "*I'll see to that*." And when used this way- the phrase, "see to" actually means: *to take care of or provide for*. When someone says, "*I'll see to that*"- they are not talking about literally "seeing" something with their eyes- but they mean to say that they will *provide for that* or they will *take care of that*.

In other words, they are "seeing" something with a specific purpose in mind. So to provide is to "make provision for what you see". "Seeing to" something is

acting on behalf of something. It is "providing." Therefore- "Providence" is the Sovereign Act of God in "seeing to" the Function and Operation and Order of the entire Universe. God will see to that.

B. Theological

Theologically, there is a reason why "seeing to" means "providing for." When Abraham was told to sacrifice his son Isaac- before they went up the mountain- young Isaac asked his father,

Genesis 22:7b

... where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

...and Abraham replied in faith:

Genesis 22:8b

...My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering...

Not long after that- God proved His Faithfulness and showed Abraham a ram caught in the thorns (**Genesis 22:14**) and in response to this Sovereign Provision-

Genesis 22:14

And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah (Yahweh) -jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. (KJV)

Genesis 22:14

Abraham called the name of that place The Lord (Yahweh) Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it will be provided." (NASV)

Genesis 22:14

14 So Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord (Yahweh) will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."(ESV)

The Name, "Jehovah" in this verse is actually the Covenant Name of God (Yahweh) that is used 6,825 times in the Old Testament. This Name was *transliterated* into English as "Jehovah" many years ago by Bible scholars who had insufficient tools and data.

The Jews considered this Name of God to be so holy- that they only used the letters "YHVH" (ho*hy+ the tetragram). The corresponding English letter "J" was used to replace the Hebrew "Y" in the earlier English translations of the Bible and the English letter "V" replaced the Hebrew "W" thus "YHVH" became "JHVH".

This alteration of the Hebrew tetragram was pronounced as "Jehovah" in English. A more accurate transliteration of "YHVH" would be to replace the English "V" with the Hebrew "W"- and keep the Hebrew "Y" thus making "JHVH" to be "YHWH" which is pronounced as "Yahweh" in English- which today is almost

universally recognized by Biblical scholars as the closet English understanding of the Hebrew Covenant Name of God.

But the Hebrew word, "jireh" (**הִרְאֵה**) used in this verse is a proper noun which, when added to "YHWH", literally means: *the Lord will see to it.*¹

So literally, Abraham relied to his young son,

"God *will see* for Himself the lamb."

Now why does God's "seeing" in Hebrew mean that He will "provide"? We can find the answer in one of the Characteristics of God that we previously studied. It is God's *Omniscience* that allows for God know everything about everything- past, present, and future. So it is true to say that the God of the Bible "sees" and "understands" the future fully- before it happens.

But although God is totally Omniscient- He is not *only* Omniscient. In addition to being completely Omniscient- God is also *Effectual*- meaning that God doesn't simply passively understand what will happen in the future- but God also orders and controls and governs the past, present, and future to such an extent- that He causes to come to pass that which is His Perfect Will. And the manifestation of this Order of all things- is called, "God's Providence".

So because of the *combination* of both God's Omniscience and His Effectualness- God never simply "*sees*" without "*acting*". God doesn't simply "*know*" on an intellectual level that something will occur at some point in the future- and then sits back passively- allowing Man to struggle to try to obtain God's Will. No, God actually *controls* and *orders* and *governs* all of the circumstances and all of the situations (including Man's choices and actions and desires) in such a way that two things will always be true:

- ✓ Man will be held completely responsible for his actions and will be judged if Man does not do the "right" thing
- ✓ That which God has determined (from before the foundation of the world) will happen- exactly as God has ordained it.

... and all of this will be done so that- in all things- God will be Glorified!

We must remember as we put together all of God's Characteristics- that the one true living God of the Bible is not a passive Participant in a world that exists without His sustaining it. Wherever God is looking- and seeing- God is acting. If God perceives- He performs; If He inspects- He effects; where He patrols- He controls.

In other words there is a profound and very wise and important Biblical reason why "Providence" does *not* merely mean: *foreknowledge* but rather means: *the active and determined Sustenance and Governance of the Universe*. When God "sees," He "sees to." His "*seeing*" is *always* with a view to *doing*.

¹ The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament Copyright © 2003 by AMG Publishers.

So when we say that God exercises His Absolute Sovereignty through His Governance and Order of the Universe- we mean to say that the single most important Aspect in all of God's Creation is that His Will is accomplished- so that the one single ultimate End will be accomplished (and not simply desired) that God is glorified.

Nothing else matters to God as much as this one aspect. Therefore- God Sovereignly Governs and Orders the Universe with this one single Objective in mind.

The Practical Implication of This Truth

Because one of the ways in which God exercises His Absolute Sovereignty over His Creation is through His Providence- the practical implication of this Truth is that Science will reflect that.

1 Timothy 6:20

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

We must realize that all Science is not *true* Science. There is something called, "science falsely so called" that goes by the name of "Science"- but which is really nothing more than a political or social effort- masquerading as Science. Genuine Science is properly defined as:

An unbiased search for Objective Propositional Truth based upon factual evidence

... which will *always* prove what is true- and will *never* promote things which cannot be proven or verified or things that are patently false. True Science is simply, therefore, the human observation of the various Ways in which God Orders and Governs the Universe. True Science will uncover and verify and make known the *provable* ways in which a Sovereign God displays His Own Glory through factual evidence.

It is important to understand that Biblical Christianity is *not* at odds with True Science. Christianity welcomes and encourages any legitimate and honest search for the Truth. Christians do not ever fear the Truth- they earnestly seek for it in all walks of life.

Regrettably though, down the centuries, wayward people on both sides have said, done, and taught sinful, ungodly, and unscientific things- all in the name of either "protecting" the Church against the "evil" of Science or of "promoting" Science against the "ignorance" of Christianity. Both sides were wrong.

What Biblical Christianity objects to is "science falsely so-called" or Pseudo-science- which is anti-intellectual; completely biased; and is an effort to minimize, hide, or even alter the Truth. There is absolutely no conflict between Biblical

Christianity and True Science and one does not have to choose between either trusting in the accuracy of the claims of Scripture and Intellectualism; Science; Astronomy; Geology; Physics; Mathematics; Technology; Medicine; or Art.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

Recap of Lesson One

1. What does **Ephesians 1:11** mean? _____

2. What do **Genesis 35:9-12** and **Isaiah 14:24-27** teach you about the rise and fall of nations? _____

3. What does **Ephesians 1:1-12** teach you about the Salvation of unworthy sinners?

4. What did you learn about the way in which God Orders and Governs the Universe by reading **Job 38:1-40:2**? _____

5. What does the word, "Providence" literally mean? _____

6. How does God "seeing" something relate to His Sovereign "Provision"? _____

7. What two Characteristics of God work in harmony concerning God's Providence?

8. Can you think of any other Attributes of God that also contribute to His Providence? _____

9. What is the Covenant Name of God? _____
10. How was this Name written by the ancient Hebrew scribes? _____
11. What is that called? _____
12. How did the early English translators alter this? _____
13. What does the Hebrew word, "jireh" literally mean when placed together with YHWH? _____

14. What two things are always maintained as God Providentially manifests His Absolute Sovereignty in the Order and Governance of the Universe? _____

15. What is the ultimate end of why God does and says everything? _____

16. What is true Science? _____

17. Why is true Science *not* in conflict with Biblical Christianity? _____

18. For what Purpose should a genuine believer use Science and Technology and Medicine and Government and Art? _____

19. What is it called when those things are used for any other reason? _____

Bonus Questions

Why do you think so much animosity has existed between the Scientific Community and the Church done through the years? _____

What could be done to correct that problem? _____
