

## Core Seminar: Systematic Theology

### *Providence*

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“For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.” *Romans 11:36*

#### I. Introduction

#### II. Providence *God’s Ongoing Relationship with Creation*

*Heidelberg Catechism #27*: “God’s providence is His almighty and ever present power, whereby, as with His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures, and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things, come not by chance but by His fatherly hand.”

(*Psalm 104*; *Jer. 23:23, 24*; *Acts 17:24-28*; *Heb. 1:3*; *Jer. 5:24*; *Acts 14:15-17*; *John 9:3*; *Prov. 22:2*; *Prov. 16:33*; *Matt. 10:29*)

#### III. Three Aspects of God’s Providence

##### “For from him...”

##### I. God Upholds and Sustains All Things: *Preservation*

(*Heb 1:3*; *Col. 1:17*; *Neh. 9:6*; *Job 34:14-15*)

*Col. 1:15-17* Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.  
16 For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— all things have been created through him and for him.  
17 He is before all things, and by him all things hold together.

##### “...and through him...”

##### 2. God Works In and Through All Things: *Concurrence*

(*Gen. 45:5*; *Eph. 1:11*; *Job 37:6-13*; *Prov. 16:9, 33*; *Phil. 2:13*)

— Primary and secondary causes

**Acts 14:15-17** “People! Why are you doing these things? We are people also, just like you, and we are proclaiming good news to you, that you turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them., 16 In past generations he allowed all the nations to

go their own way, <sup>17</sup> although he did not leave himself without a witness, since he did what is good by giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons and filling you with food and your hearts with joy.” (see also Acts 17:24-27)

“...and to him are all things.  
To him be glory forever. Amen.”

### 3. God Rules and Directs All Things: Government

(Dan 4:35; Rom. 8:28; Ps. 103:19)

#### Daniel 4:34-35

##### NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PRAISE

<sup>34</sup> But at the end of those days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven, and my sanity returned to me. Then I praised the Most High and honored and glorified him who lives forever:

For his dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
and his kingdom is from generation to generation.

<sup>35</sup> All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing,  
and he does what he wants with the army of heaven  
and the inhabitants of the earth.

There is no one who can block his hand  
or say to him, “What have you done?”

Romans 8:28 that “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who **are called according to his purpose.**”

*Ephesians 1:7-12* In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup> that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding. <sup>9</sup> He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that **he purposed** in the Messiah <sup>10</sup> **as a plan** for the right time—**to bring everything together** in the Messiah, both things in heaven and things on earth in him.

<sup>11</sup> In him we have also received an inheritance, because we were predestined **according to the plan** of the one who **works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will**, <sup>12</sup> so that we who had already put our hope in the Messiah might bring praise to his glory.

Notice in these verses a few different aspects of God's divine *government*.

First, God's governing activity is *universal* and does not merely extend to his own people.

Second, God is *good* in his government.

Third, God is *personally concerned* about those who are his.

Fourth, God is *sovereign* in his government.

**4. Application:** *How does the doctrine of Providence comfort the believer in Christ?*

Trust

Gratitude

Patience

Hope