

# THE DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE

BY

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**Scripture Texts**— “God, who made the world and all things in it, seeing that he is LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, seeing *HE GIVETH TO ALL LIFE, AND BREATH, AND ALL THINGS, . . . FOR IN HIM WE LIVE, AND MOVE AND LIVE OUR BEING.* • . Acts 17:24-28.

• *.by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. . . and UPHOLDING ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER.*“ Hebrews 1:2,3.

“ . ,LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us; FOR THOU ALSO HAST WROUGHT ALL OUR WORKS IN US. Isaiah 26:12.

“For he performeth the thing that is APPOINTED FOR ME AND MANY SUCH THINGS ARE WITH HIM.” Job 23:14.

“ . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is GOD WHO WORKETH IN YOU BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE.” Phil. 2:12,13.

## INTRODUCTION

In each of the texts is found, God’s working of will in us and among all others. The belief that God governs and works all things according to the counsel of HIS OWN WILL, (Eph. 1:11) is known in theology as the doctrine of PROVIDENCE.

Providence is God’s work in government (John 5:17). This present work of God is in governing that which He has already created so as it will fulfill the course which has been determined.

God’s DECREES OR PREDESTINATION are related to His providence in the following manner—

1. God has decreed all things whatsoever come to pass;
2. all events are inner-related to each other so that nothing is independent of His cause; and in time God governs these events so that what HE has decreed will come to pass in His own time and way. God’s decrees are two-fold.. causative and permissive; direct and indirect; and pleasure or displeasure. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, just as we take no pleasure in bearing the rod over the wrong-doer, but the purpose of God formed in His holiness demands that the wicked die and this is His will.

## OBJECTIONS

The modern god of this world, the *idol of free—will*, objects against the absolute predestination and providence of God by saying that—“If God had determined all things that come to pass and then rules in this present world then that would make God the author of sin.”

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## ANSWER

Objections are nothing at all. Objections are the children of rationalism and those devilish brats all vanish under the rod of God’s Word. If the Bible teaches what I have stated then all objections are worthless. It has been said that a fool can raise more objections in one hour than a wise man can answer in a month. And, this is true, but remember... objections have no bearing on a issue if the issue is taught in the Bible and proven by the Bible. But, we ask the following to cause some consideration and serious thinking on these lines————

WAS GOD GUILTY OF ARSON WHEN HE DESTROYED SODOM AND GOMORRAH?

WILL CHRIST BE GUILTY OF ARSON AND MURDER WHEN HE RETURNS AND BURNS THIS EARTH AND DESTROYS THE UNGODLY?

WAS GOD GUILTY OF ADULTRY WHEN HE GAVE DAVID’S WIFES TO DAVID’S SON IN SIGHT OF ALL ISREAL AS A JUDGMENT AGAINST DAVID?

WAS GOD GUILTY OF MURDER WHEN HE SLEW HIM WHO TOUCHED THE ARK OF GOD?

WAS GOD GUILTY OF MURDER WHEN HE COMMANDED THE DEATH OF THE CANNANITES?

### WHY OUR WORKS ARE HOLY

The truth is that most of the time actions within themselves are neither sinful nor righteous.

Ro 14:14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*

We do holy works because the things which we do, if according to His will and Word, are holy. Our God has commanded certain works, and the very fact that He has commanded them makes them holy. Baptism, if upon a non-professed saint, is unholy.

### Why God’s Works are Holy

God’s works are holy because issuing from a Holy God and done according to His will. It is not and cannot be said that God is holy because HE DOES ONLY NICE

**AND SWEET THINGS! Indeed not, for the truth is that GOD IS HOLY IN CHARACTER, AND THEREFORE EVERYTHING WHICH HE DOES IS HOLY! God's works are holy because they are done by a HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS GOD.**

**Our acts are holy only when done according to the laws of God, The elect receive virtue through Christ and His Holy Acts as he followed the will of God, in His holy obedience, but God's works are all holy because HE, HIMSELF, IS HOLY AND HIS HOLINESS GIVES VIRTUE TO HIS ACTIONS!**

### **GENERAL REMARKS ON PROVIDENCE**

**First there is a twofold connection between PROVIDENCE AND CREATION.**

**BY ACTS OF CREATION God did bring into being the things which He did purpose**

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**to make and also HE DID CONFER UPON THEM their respective natures, qualities, habits, modes of being and laws of existence. Also involved were the thoughts and actions of the so—called higher orders of creation.**

**By acts of Providence God simply keeps those things, or permits or causes decay or change in them, to such an extent and within such limits as He ALONE HAS PURPOSED.**

**Also, God in the course of HIS OWN PURPOSE, directs, governs, and guides all things in accordance with THE NATURES WHICH HE, BY CREATION AND Decree, HAS GIVEN THEM, AND THE LAWS HE HAS IMPOSED ON THEM AS THE OBJECTS OF HIS CREATION.**

**Second, there is still another connection between PROVIDENCE AND PREDESTINATION.**

**The predestination of God is His purpose according to a predetermined plan so that what He wills to do and what He wills to permit, others to do, shall be done, for that which is determined shall be done.**

**Da 11:36 And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.**

**He fixes the events that will occur as well as the means and methods which HE will use to accomplish these events. But the providence of God is the actual governing of the things which he has purposed that He, Himself, would do, or the permitting of those things which HE HAS DETERMINED TO ALLOW others to do.**

**The predestination of God or His ETERNAL PURPOSE was formed in eternity while HIS GOVERNMENT or His providence is that which HE DOES IN TIME.**

### **GENERAL OUTLINE ON PROVIDENCE**

The providence of God is **GENERAL, ALL INCLUSIVE AND ABSOLUTE!**

The Bible teaches that there are no exceptions to the government of God. God governs the material creation, the angels, demons, Satan and man, both elect and reprobate. No element of creation is left to its own development by chance as independent of God, but all things are inner-related and work together for the good of God's elect and His honor and glory, Romans 8:28.

God also governs in the laws of nature so that even nature works according to the decrees of God.

**Nahum 1 The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.**

**2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies.**

**3 The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.**

**4 He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.**

**5 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.**

**6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.**

### **God's Government is According to GOD'S NATURE.**

Therefore all things in His actions are holy. God never works against His own nature. There are cases where it would seem that God has changed His mind or repented, but these are only figurative expressions dealing with God's relationship with man. In the case of the flood of Noah's age, and Moses interceding with God against Israel, these are only expressions in which God used appearances to draw out man in a greater way. God knew the outcome of Abraham's offering up of Isaac and the result did nothing for God. These works with man in no way represent God changing His mind or correcting His course as I will prove later from the express statements of Scripture. Here is a rule of interpretation ... anytime expressions are used of God which belong strictly to the human family, they must be understood **ONLY IN A FIGURATIVE MANNER.**

### **Holiness is the Main Attribute of God**

When we think of God's nature the very first thing we must do is to find out the

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first and chief attribute of God. It is not love but **HOLINESS!** The judgments against man are hard for the modernists to accept because of a false view of God's love, but when holiness is found and established as the foundation of God's judgments then the various acts are no longer the problem which they were once. God destroyed the old world of Noah's days because of His holiness. In

eternity God ordained the wicked to eternal damnation due to His holiness and God elected His people unto salvation due to His holiness. He established the eternal covenant due to such holiness. Certainly His everlasting love was involved, but His holiness determines His actions. This means that the only reason that God punishes sinners and damns man is due to their sins and evil. I am not speaking of why He passes over the reprobates, but His actions upon them. God does not take joy in punishment, but rather His holy being demands that He punish evil beings. He punished us for our sins in Christ but the reprobates within themselves. God's nature cannot be divorced from His government. This is why it seems to us that God is hard, when He is not, but rather, longsuffering and full of mercy and pity. His government is characterized in holiness.

### **God's Providence is According to the NATURE OF THOSE GOVERNED**

This is the major point to understand when considering man. God governs man in such a way that **MAN REMAINS A FREE MORAL AGENT!** Cannot God govern free moral agents without making them mere sticks or stones as the Arminians like to claim our doctrine means? To deny such would be to limit God. God governs man, not by taking away the moral accountability of man, but by working through the very nature God has determined men will have. Man's will, though never free, is not forced in anything which God does through man. God's elect are made willing in the day of God's power while the reprobates are simply governed by God so as not to cause the purpose of God to fail.

### **Several DIVISIONS IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE**

God's rule exists over the material creation, Prov. 8:15—29;

the unconscious creation, Joel 2:1—26;

the conscious creation; angels and man.

There should be no question about the government of God over the angels and satan, Job 1:6—12,

Now we must face the question of the government of God over **MAN!** We affirm that God governs man both individually and collectively, over the ruler, the nation, and the subject, with the saved and damned,. we affirm that the government of God over man is all inclusive and purposed by God alone.

### **GOD'S ABSOLUTE GOVERNMENT OVER THE REPROBATES**

Even though they are the children of the devil and hated by God, Psa. 5:5, reprobates exist due to the longsuffering of God, Romans 9:13—23. They are the planting of Satan in the field of the world, and are called the "tares"

**Matthew 13:36-43. They exist simply to SHOW THE WRATH AND POWER OF GOD .. Romans 9:22. The LORD HATH MADE ALL THINGS FOR HIMSELF; YEA, EVEN THE WICKED, FOR THE DAY OF EVIL.’ Proverbs 16:4. The ungodly are governed just as strongly as the elect, though in a very different way. God governs the ungodly in a restraining manner determined by the course of sin and judgments, with but few exceptions....”Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; THE REMAINDER OF WRATH SHALT THOU RESTRAIN, Psa. 76:10.**

**God exercises a permissive and yet a restraining government in the world of the ungodly. No matter the event that occurs, it will not cause the plan and purpose of God to become void. There are things possible which will never occur because they would destroy the predestinated course of events for God’s elect, I Sam. 23:11, 12.**

### **The GOVERNMENT OF NATIONS**

**God’s government over the nations is taught in the Word, Acts 17:26 shows this very well. Not only are the nations governed, but God governs the course of their history, Revelation 17:14—18. This is seen also throughout the Old Testament as God marshaled nations against and for Israel as if pleased Him. The curse on King Nebuchadnezzar was caused because he had the ARMINIAN CONCEPT OF GOD AND GOD’S DECREES and for that God caused him to wonder about like a beast for seven years until....”thou KNOW THAT THE MOST HIGH RUIETH IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN, AND GIVETH IT TO WHOMSOEVER HE WILL!**

**Following the seven years as a beast the king was able to lift up his eyes to heaven and his reason returned unto him and then he made the following true and regenerated confession....”And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him who liveth forever, whose DOMINION IS AN EVERLASTING DOMINION, AND HIS KINGDOM IS FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. AND ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH ARE REPUTED AS NOTHING: AN HE DOETH ACCORDING TO HIS WILL IN THE ARMY OF HEAVEN, AND AMONG THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH, AND NONE CAN STAY HIS HAND, OR SAY UNTO HIM, WHAT DOETH THOU? And at the same time MY REASON RETURNED UNTO ME” Dan. 4:30-36.**

### **God Rules All Nations According to His will**

**Not only does God determine the king and the kingdom, but He even determines the votes or lots cast to cause the outcome, Prov. 16:33. God determines the policy the king makes, Prov, 21:1, and the social class of the subjects, Proverbs 22:2 and 20:12.**

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**The question is now.. IF GOD DOES THESE THINGS, WHICH HE DOES, THEN WHY IS THE WORLD IN SUCH A MESS? The answer is found in in Remans 1 and 2 These. 2:1—13. Remember these points, *now God’s government is in accord with the fall and curse of man.* Hence it is a *judgment of sin and evil on man due to his sinful nature.* Because of the sin of Adam, which God determined to permit, God is developing the religion, government and society of the antichrist as a judgment**

against the wicked and sinful works of the human race, also this point is seen in Galatians 6:6,7.

### **GOD'S PROVIDENCE IS PERSONAL**

So personal is God's government and predestination that **NO PERSON DETERMINES HIS OWN DESTINY**. We are of God. He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God hears not us; **BY THIS KNOW WE THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR.**" ( I John 4:6). Since this is so important I will present it from a positive and a negative point of view.

### **NEGATIVE STATEMENT ABOUT MAN'S DESTINY**

O Lord, I KNOW THAT THE WAY OF MAN IS NOT IN HIMSELF; IT IS NOT IN MAN THAT WALKETH TO DIRECT HIS STEPS. Jeremiah 10:23...

### **POSITIVE STATEMENT ABOUT MAN'S DESTINY**

MAN'S GOINGS ARE OF THE LORD; HOW CAN A MAN, THEN UNDERSTAND HIS OWN WAY? Proverbs 20:24. Also read the following as well...Proverbs 19:21, 16:9 and Psalms 37:23.

God's government is personal and absolute. Man is not the determiner of his destiny. All things were created by and for the purpose of God and God is the governor of all things. Now, we ask .. if such is so then why does not God save all individuals...the answer is.. because He has not purposed to do so. And you can find a reply in 2 Peter 3:9.. for the laws of English and Greek grammar both require that the pronouns 'us,' 'all,' and "every" refer back to the "beloved ones" or elect ones of verse 8. The providence of God is seen in those whom He saves and those whom He damns.

### **GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN SALVATION**

God's will and desire are both being accomplished.. not one part of His purpose will fail...Isaiah 46:9— and He will do all which He desires.. Job 23:13,14. The elect are saved by God's purpose or pleasure, Eph. 1:3 and other verses such as Acts 13:48 and I These. 5:9 show that salvation and the continuing (as the word in I These. 5:9 denotes) along with our faith, is by

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God's appointment. The elect were chosen **UNTO SALVATION** from the beginning, 2 Thess. 2:13 and given grace according to God's plan and purpose before the world began...2 Tim. 1:8,9. Notice that in each case...those who are saved must trace their cause in salvation to. God's will, purpose and pleasure, but not man's, John 1:11-13.

### **GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN DAMNATION**

In Romans 9:14—24 the Scripture sets forth **TWO CLASSES**.. Vessels of Mercy who are **AFORE PREPARED UNTO GLORY**. . then the **VESSELS OF WRATH FITTED UNTO DESTRUCTION**....THEY are here to show the **WRATH AND POWER**

**OF GOD! In Jude 4, you will find that these non-elect are evil and have been BEFORE OFOLD ORDAINED UNTO DAMNATION. And during the life of Christ, not only is it said. they cannot believe, John 12, but that they were appointed to stumble and fall at Christ, I Peter 2:7—10.**

**One group is appointed unto disobedience while others are the elect. God's government is complete and absolute. God's government is such that none can stay His hand or resist His will. Yes, man resists God's revealed or public will as found in the Bible, but no man resists His will or purpose...Isaiah 46:8—13.**

### **CONCLUSION**

**God rules in heaven and over the earth. He rules everything either by determining what He will do or what He will permit others to do. But, all in all, He rules! "The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice..." Psa. 97:1 and then "The LORD reigneth; let the peoples TREMBLE..." Psa. 99:1.**

**Remember that the very thing I have affirmed about mankind, the Bible also affirms about Jesus Christ too. Read Acts 2:22,23 with Acts 4:27,28 and realize the meaning of Jesus in this saying....**

**AND TRULY THE SON OF MAN GOETH AS IT WAS DETERMINED BUT WOE UNTO THAT MAN BY WHOM HE IS BETRAYED. Lk. 22 :22.,**