

Q11. What are God's works of providence?

A11. **God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.**

**Scripture References:** Psalm 103:19, 104:24, 145:17; Hebrews 1:3; Matthew 10:29-30; Nehemiah 9:6; Isaiah 28:29

DQ1: What is God's providence?

DQ2: What is God's providence over?

DQ3: By what does God do the works of providence?

DQ4: What are two ways in which providence works?

DQ5: What is God's holiness?

DQ6: What is God's wisdom?

DQ7: What is God's power?

DQ8: What does God preserve and govern?

DQ9: Is there anything that occurs outside of God's providence?

**Notes:**

We have already touched upon God's providence in QA 8.

Providence is "the doctrine that God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that he (1) keeps them existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them; (2) cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do; and (3) directs them to fulfill his purposes." (Grudem, Systematic Theology, p. 1252) This is slightly different from the two-prong definition given in the Shorter Catechism which divides God's providence as preserving and governing the creation. Perhaps the best way to reconcile the two different definitions is to see (2) and (3) of Grudem's definition as the second prong of the Shorter Catechism.

God does the work of preserving everything. What does God preserve? What preserves is His creation. God's creation and providence are inseparable. God reveals Himself to man through His creation and providence. The law and order is maintained in creation because of providence. By understanding providence, we can also understand God's ways. Not only do we live within God's creation and providence, we are also required to live in them. Creation and providence are both sovereign acts of God but are not something that we will perfectly understand at present.

God's providence unfolds in accordance with His holiness, wisdom and power.

What is God's holiness? God's holiness is a doctrine of the Bible that teaches that God is separate from sin and has nothing do with sin and that God works all things to uphold His own righteousness. If this is true, then God's providence is not impacted by and separate from sin even when this world is drenched in sin and would cause His righteousness to be upheld without compromising with sin in any way.

What is God's wisdom? God's wisdom is a doctrine of the Bible that teaches that God sets the highest possible purposes and accomplishes them by the best possible means. If this true, then God's providence accomplishes the highest purpose by the best means. (Romans 8:28)

What is God's power? God's power is a doctrine of the Bible that teaches that God accomplishes all things that He desires to accomplish. If this is true, then God's providence tells us that God will accomplish all things He desires.

If God did not preserve the universe even for a moment, we could not rest and would remain restless constantly. Because God does preserve the night and the day that we are able to be soundly at sleep at night trusting that the there will be a dawn of the day the next morning. This is all possible because God is "sustaining all things by his powerful word." (Hebrews 1:3) Further, God's providence should lead us to worship of Him. "You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you." (Nehemiah 9:6)

If God could not rule the universe by His preserving providence, then God could not be relied upon or trusted. Further, there would be no reason for us to worship Him. How could we worship a God who has no ability to maintain rule an order in the universe. Thankfully, however, God of the Bible is God of preserving providence.

In addition to preserving His creation, God governs His creation. King David said that he did not fear evil even as he walked through the valley of the shadow of death because God was with him. (Psalm 23) To say that God governs all things is to say that He is with us and He does not miss a beat about it. God's governing providence is well-expressed in Psalm 9:7: "A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you."

There are four ways in which God governing providence is shown:

First, God perfectly governs all the nature. (Matthew 5:45; Psalm 104:14; Job 37:12) Among countless number of events that take place, there is no event that occurs by accident.

Second, God perfectly governs all nations and peoples. (Daniel 4:25; 2:21; Acts 17:26) Although what we observe of the world is it is filled with upheavals and devastations and out of control, God's providence is still on course.

Third, God perfectly governs each person. (1 Samuel 2:6-8) Even a sparrow or a hair on our head would fall without God's desire and providence.

Fourth, God perfectly governs us without in any way harming our freedom. (Proverbs 16:1; Philippians 2:13; Psalm 76:10)

Based upon the above four ways in which God works, we can be sure that the God of the Bible is true God. None of the four could be accomplished unless God is true God.

God's providence applies to small to large. To God, nothing is a nuisance. Everything is His work. For Him to preserve and govern His own creation is never beneath Him. This is an amazing fact and shows that He is God.

If we do not acknowledge and accept providence, then we cannot have peace of God. The God of the Bible is God of providence. He does not relinquish His power to preserve and govern to anyone else.

Surprisingly, although God empowered man to govern on His behalf, man did not treat such empower as something extraordinary and, as such, fell into sin.

We often do not understand God's providence. When can you best understand God's providence? Write them down.