

Biblical Theology

U2L11: Sovereignty of God Part 1

Introduction

- **Sovereignty of God**
 - Definition: God's exercise of rule and reign over his creation.
 - God's preservation of creation.
 - God's providence in creation.

God's Preservation of Creation

- Definition: God keeps all created things existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them.
 1. **God sustains creation.**
 - *Nehemiah 9:6 – You have made...and you preserve all of them.*
 - *Hebrews 1:3 - [Jesus] upholds the universe by the word of his power.*
 - *Colossians 1:17 - [Jesus] is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*
 2. **God sustains life.**
 - *Job 34:14-15 - If he should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust.*
 - *Psalms 104:29 - When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.*
 3. **God sustains sustaining qualities of creation.**
 - *Matthew 6:26-28 - ...and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.*
 - *Psalms 139:13 - For you formed my inward parts*
- Hope: Eternal Preservation
 - *John 10:28 - ...they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

God's Providence in Creation

- Definition: God's Providence in Creation is his continuous activity whereby he makes all the events of the physical, mental, and moral realms work out his purpose, and this purpose is nothing short of the original design of God in creation.
 - **Etymology:** Foreknowledge and Provision for Purposes
 1. **Natural occurrences in creation are within God's providence.**
 - *Job 37:6-13 – Snow, rain, wind, ice, clouds...he causes it to happen.*
 - *Psalms 135:6 - Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth...*
 - *Psalms 104:14 - You cause the grass to grow...*
 - *Matthew 10:29 - not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.*
 2. **Seemingly random occurrences in creation are within God's providence.**
 - *Proverbs 16:33 - The lot is cast into the lap, but every decision is from the Lord.*
 - *Acts 1:26 – The lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the apostles.*
 3. **The affairs of nations are within God's providence.**
 - *Job 12:23 - He makes nations great, and he destroys them;*
 - *Psalms 22:28 - For kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.*
 - *Romans 13:1 - ...and those that exist have been instituted by God.*

4. **All aspects of everyday human life are within God's providence.**
 - *Matthew 6:11 – Give us this day our daily bread...*
 - *Psalms 139:16 - the days that were formed for me,*
 - *Psalms 75:6-7 - it is God who executes judgment,*
 - *Proverbs 21:1 - The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord...*
 - *Romans 8:28 - And we know that in all things God works for the good.*

5. **God's eternal decrees are maintained as God's providence.**
 - *Psalms 139:16 - the days that were formed for me*
 - *Acts 2:23 - this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.*
 - *Ephesians 1:4-6 - he chose us in him before the foundation of the world*

Importance of Human Actions

- Does this mean our choices don't matter?
 - "God causes all things that happen, but he does so in such a way that upholds mankind's ability to make willing, responsible, choices, choices that have real and eternal results, for which humans are held accountable." (Grudem 232)

- 1. **Every human being is responsible for his or her own actions.**
 - *Genesis 3:12-13 – "What is this that you have done?"*
 - *Revelation 20:13 – and each person was judged according to what they had done.*

- 2. **Our actions have real results and change the course of events.**
 - *1 Samuel 23:11-13 - And now, will Saul come down as your servant has heard?*
 - *Numbers 14:1-4 - "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."*

- 3. **God allows prayer to affect the outcome of events.**
 - *James 4:2 - You do not have, because you do not ask.*
 - *John 16:24 - Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*
 - *Exodus 32:12-14 - And the Lord relented from the disaster...*

Discussion Questions

1. What attributes of God are tied to the understanding that God preserves all of creation by his sovereignty?
2. What aspects of God's providence can be difficult to accept? Explain.
3. Is it proper to hold a fatalistic view of our lives in light of God's sovereignty? Explain.

Reading Assignment

None