

Rejoice, be glad

**The Lord's
Sovereignty**

Works through

His Providence

For our good

The Lord's Sovereignty works through His Providence

Sovereignty refers to God's Holy Character and Glory, and describes the characteristic of God who is in authority over all things.

Providence refers to all His action, that is, whatever He does. Nothing happens in heaven or on earth outside His Sovereign Providence. Providence is the working out of His sovereign will. Only God is able to exercise providence over the world through all events, for He is in control of His personal creation. Human history is the history of God's providential hand intervening in the everyday lives of men who experience His judgment or, His loving grace. Providence is the hand of God fulfilling His will in all things.

"I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the LORD, who does all these things."
Isaiah 45:7

'Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it?'
Lam 3:37

'In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider—God has made the one as well as the other. So that man will not discover anything that will be after him.'
Ecc 7:14

"It is He who changes the times and the periods; He removes kings and appoints kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, And knowledge to people of understanding."
Dan 2:21

'He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.'
Heb 1:3

Jeremiah the prophet declares: *'I know, LORD, that a person's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a person who walks to direct his steps.'* (Jer. 10:23)
Solomon says: *'A man's path is directed by the Lord; how then can he decide his way?'*
Prov. 20:24

'The plans of the heart belong to a person, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.'
Prov 16:1

Angels are also used by the hand of God for His purpose. *'And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; but as he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw and was sorry about the catastrophe, and said to the destroying angel, "It is enough; now relax your hand."* And the angel of the LORD was standing

by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.’ (1 Chron 21:15) ‘The LORD commanded the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath.’

1 Chron 21:27

The Lord compels His people to do what He desires

Salvation is by the hand of God so that no one can boast. *‘When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and all who had been appointed to eternal life believed.’* Acts 13:48

“And I will put My Spirit within you and bring it about that you walk in My statutes, and are careful and follow My ordinances.” Ezek 36:27

‘For it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to work for His good pleasure.’ Phil 2:13

The fallen world is also the means of carrying out the will of God

For the sake of those He has chosen, our Lord and God is using every disagreeable experience, every disturbing situation, and every distasteful event, to turn the eyes of our hearts from seeking what we need from the world and people, to concentrate on trusting on the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Sovereign King, who has all power and authority to do as He pleases. So that by following His example of taking up our cross of self-denial through devoted obedience, all that is painful, and all that is a blessing, can be used together by Him for our training in holiness, which always results in our ultimate good and glory.

History shows how God uses providence for His purpose. *The story of Joseph’s reveals how his brothers sold Joseph into slavery, falsely accused imprisoned, and became Prime Minister of Egypt. But providence determined the course of history.*

“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to keep many people alive.” Genesis 50:20

Jesus died according to the eternal plan of God to bring us near to God.

‘Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.’ (1 Pet. 3:18) Because of God's providence we have a Saviour, Jesus Christ.

"You who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:13) "Christ died for sins." (1 Pet. 3:18) "the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23

The substitutionary nature of Jesus's death in our place is the key idea for understanding God's providence and how God deals with sin in order to provide us with forgiveness. *"Christ died for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous." (1 Pet. 3:18) The one who "knew no sin, became sin." (2 Cor 5:21) He took our sin—so that we might receive mercy.*

Jesus paid the price for our redemption when he *"gave his life as a ransom in the place of many." (Mark 10:45) Jesus reconciled us to God by bearing our sins himself (1 Pet. 2:24) "God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement through the shedding of his blood" (Rom 3:25) "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:32*

We are in Christ through the providence of God

"He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He set forth in Him, regarding His plan of the fullness of the times, to bring all things together in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things in accordance with the plan of His will." Eph 1:9-11

Evil people do evil things, but God works out His purposes for the world, some for blessings and some for judgement.

The crucifixion of Jesus was no accident.

"This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death." Acts 2:23

The death of Christ by the hands of sinners was part of God's providence.

God the Father killed His only beloved Son as a living sacrifice in our place so that we can be reconciled with Him. So, we too, according to the providence of God, must offer ourselves as a living sacrifice acceptable to God.

Paul says: *'Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which*

is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.'
Rom 12:1-2

God's providence is for our good.

'The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.'

Rom 8:16-18

'And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.'

Rom 8:28-29

Now we live by faith and not by sight

Because all that is good and painful comes from the hand of God, and is planned for our greater good, we can therefore give thanks in all things, the good and the disagreeable. Because in the hidden mystery of God, all things are pointing to the glory of God and our inheritance in Christ.

Jesus said, for us to be a part of the glory of God we need to die to self and follow the example of Jesus Christ. *"If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me."*

Luke 9:23

Faith in Christ obeys the words He has spoken for our benefit, so that our history can be incorporated into His history. History requires the providence of God's hand to be a transforming grace and power used for the benefit of the chosen children worked out through self-sacrifice and self-denial.

But the blessing coming from the death of Jesus is only for the remnant chosen by the Father; for the hand of God means judgment for others who remain unrepentant who seek the pleasure of the world. For those who have not received a faith of the same kind as ours from God, God's sovereignty is working through providence as the beginning of their eternal judgement.

Therefore, we work out our salvation in reverence for God, who is at work in us, so that we will do all things according to His good pleasure. Phil 2:12-13

According to the providence of God, the cross we take up in Jesus' name is always a death sentence to self-interest in order to serve God and love our neighbour. Our cross is always painful and ongoing, but it is the perfect instrument for our glorification. For without holiness, we will not see God.

Heb 12:14

“In the end, we rightly profit from the discipline of the cross when we learn that this life, considered in itself, is troubled, turbulent, attended by many miseries, and never entirely happy, and that whatever things we consider good in this life are uncertain, passing, vain, and spoiled because they're mixed with many evils. And from this we likewise conclude that we should expect and hope for nothing other than trouble in this life, and that we should set our eyes on heaven where we expect our crown. So, indeed, we ought to realise that our souls will never seriously rise to the desire and contemplation of the future life until they've been soaked in scorn for this present life.”

John Calvin. The little book on the Christian life. Part 4. Meditation on the future life.

Faith overcomes fear when we look to Christ

“If, then, we want to be disciples of Christ, we should make it our aim to soak our minds in the sort of sensitivity and obedience to God that can tame and subdue every natural impulse contrary to His command. So it will be that no matter what kind of cross is placed upon us, we will steadily maintain endurance even through the narrowest straits of the soul. Indeed, adverse circumstances will keep their bitterness, and we will feel their bite. When afflicted by illness, we will groan and toss and long for health. When pursued by poverty, we will feel the stings of sadness and anxiety. We will bear the weight of sorrow at dishonour, contempt, and injustice. When loved ones die, we will naturally weep. But this will always be our conclusion: Nevertheless, the Lord has willed it. Therefore, let us follow His will. Indeed, this thought must intervene in the midst of sorrow's very stings, in the midst of our groans and tears, in order to incline our hearts to endure those things with which they're inflicted.” John Calvin. The little book on the Christian life.

Whether the trials the Lord assigns each of us are at our place of work, or in our homes, or in the church; we have the potential of denying Christ by responding according to the flesh of the natural man, or, in devoted and loving reverence for God, we cast aside the thinking of our old fallen nature, to live according to the mind of the Spirit as a child of God, who is born again with a divine nature in the image of Christ, to live for Christ.

So we are told, *'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.'*
Phil 4:6

God works all things in heaven and earth together for us. Not just in the background, but in our very presence. For it is by faith that He dwells in us.

'So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to all the fullness of God.'
Eph 3:17-19

So even when we are suffering the very hardest trials and tribulations, we are comforted by God. *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.'*
2 Cor 1:3-5

'Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time, having cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares about you....knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brothers and sisters who are in the world.'
1 Pet 5:6-7, 9

All our anxious thoughts must be submitted to the sovereign providence of our Lord who lives in us, because He is working for our good. If we are ever to know the peace of His presence in a troubled world, we surrender to Him.

We give thanks for all things, because whatever God allows to touch our lives, good and bad, is for the development of our holiness, and therefore our good.
1 Thess 5:16-18

Living Water Resources

Come to the River

'You cause me to know the path of life; in your presence is joyful abundance, at your right hand there are pleasures forever.' Psalm 16:11

You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek." Psalm 27:8

'The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear Him, and He makes known to them His covenant.'
Psalm 25:14

Let's come before His presence with a song of thanksgiving, Let's shout joyfully to Him in songs with instruments. Psalm 95:2

Our story is part of God's story worked out over the history of man through the providence of Jesus Christ for the glory of God.

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