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Section: Doctrine of God

**HANDOUT NOTES**

**Q18. Does God control and have authority over all things?**

Yes. He rules in and over all things. He is in control of all things. God does all that He wills with creation.

* **Introduction**

**Heidelberg:** “The almighty and everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by His hand, He upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by His fatherly hand.”

**Isaiah 55:8-9** “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

**Charles Spurgeon**: “There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God’s Sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that Sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children ought more earnestly to contend than the doctrine of their Master over all creation—the Kingship of God over all the works of His own hands—the Throne of God and His right to sit upon that Throne.”

**Romans 8:28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

**God’s Sovereignty (*Word of Truth Catechism*):** “As the one true Ruler and Owner of creation, God has rightful and complete authority over all things. He has legitimate claim to absolute lordship, and His governing is just.”

**God’s Providence (*Word of Truth Catechism*):** “God controls and directs all things, and He does so to fulfill His purposes after the counsel of His own holy will for His glory. God is the supreme Being who answers to no one and who has the absolute right to do with His creation as He desires; nothing happens without His ordination.”

**The 1689 Confession of Faith:** “From all eternity God decreed everything that occurs, without reference to anything outside himself. He did this by the perfectly wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably. … In this decree God’s wisdom is displayed in directing all things, and his power and faithfulness are demonstrated in accomplishing his decree.”

**Louis Berkhof:** “Divine providence is that work of God by which He preserves all His creatures, is active in all that transpires in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end.”

* **God’s Sovereignty over All Things**

**Isaiah 46:9-10“**remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose’”

**The 1689 Confession of Faith:** “God has decreed in himself, *from all eternity*, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass.”

**Psalm 103:19**The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.

**1 Timothy 6:15** ... [God] is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords

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

**Ephesians 1:11** ... [God] works all things according to the counsel of his will

**Job 42:2** “I know that you [God] can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”

**Psalm 115:3** Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

**John 3:27** ... “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.”

**Isaiah 45:7** (KJV) I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.

**Lamentations 3:38** Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?

**Amos 3:6 “**... Does disaster come to a city, unless the LORD has done it?”

**The 1689 Confession of Faith:** “The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God are so thoroughly demonstrated in his providence, that his sovereign plan includes even the first fall and every other sinful action both of angels and humans. God’s providence over sinful actions does not occur by simple permission. Instead, God most wisely and powerfully limits and in other ways arranges and governs sinful actions. Through a complex arrangement of methods he governs sinful actions to accomplish his perfectly holy purposes. Yet he does this in such a way that the sinfulness of their acts arises only from the creatures and not from God. Because God is altogether holy and righteous, he can neither originate nor approve of sin.”

**The 1689 Confession of Faith:** “All things come to pass unchangeably and certainly in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, who is the first cause.

Thus, nothing happens to anyone by chance or outside of God’s providence. Yet by the same providence God arranges all things to occur according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.”

**Note:** In Scripture, the fault/blame/responsibility/guilt of sin is never assigned to God, rather, it is assigned to one or more of these three parties:

1) Demons (especially Satan)

2) Adam (the first man, the first federal head)

3) Us (fallen men, women, boys, and girls after Adam)

**James 1:13** Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

**Psalm 11:7** For the Lord is righteous ...

**Psalm 18:30** (NIV) As for God, his way is perfect …

**John 8:44 “**You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

**Revelation 12:9** … that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world …

**Romans 5:12, 15-19 12**… sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin … **15**… many died through one man's trespass … **16**… the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation … **17**… because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man … **18**… one trespass led to condemnation for all men … **19**… by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners …

**James 1:13-14** Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. *But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire*.

**Romans 1:18 & 32** (NIV) **18**The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness … **32**Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

**Romans 9:22-23** What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory

**Herman Bavinck**: “Just as a father forbids a child to use a sharp knife, though he himself uses it without any ill results, so God forbids us rational creatures to commit the sin that He himself can and does use as a means of glorifying His name.”

**Lamentations 3:38** Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?

**Psalm 135:6**Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.

* **God’s Sovereignty over Nature and Weather**

**Psalm 147:16-18**He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes.He hurls down his crystals of ice like crumbs; who can stand before his cold?He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow and the waters flow.

**A.W. Pink**: “Earth and air, fire and water, hail and snow, stormy winds and angry seas, all perform the word of His power and fulfill His Sovereign pleasure. Therefore, when we complain about the weather we are, in reality, murmuring against God.”

**Psalm 104:14** You [God] cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth

**Further Study:** Mark 4:39-41, Job 5:10, Psalms 147:8, Psalms 148:8, Leviticus 26:4, Acts 14:17

* **God’s Sovereignty over Non-Human Living Creatures**

**Exodus 8:22** “But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth.”

**Exodus 9:3-6**”behold, the hand of the LORD will fall with a very severe plague upon your livestock that are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks.But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing of all that belongs to the people of Israel shall die.”And the LORD set a time, saying, “Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land.”And the next day the LORD did this thing. All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one of the livestock of the people of Israel died.

**Matthew 10:29** “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.”

**Numbers 22:28** Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?”

* **God’s Sovereignty over the Affairs of Nations**

**Psalm 22:28** For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.

**Job 12:23** “He makes nations great, and he destroys them; he enlarges nations, and leads them away.”

**Daniel 2:21** “... he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding”

**John 19:11** Jesus [told Pilate], “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given to you from above ...”

**Romans 13:1** Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

* **God’s Sovereignty over Angels: Both Demons and Good Angels**

**A.W. Pink:** "It is clear from Scripture, that the angels, good and evil, are under God's control, and willingly or unwillingly carry out God's purpose."

**Further Study:** 1 Chron. 21:15, 27; Acts 12:11; Rev. 22:6; Matt. 13:41; Matt. 24:31; Judges 9:23; 1 Kings 22:23; 1 Sam. 16:14; Matt. 4:11

* **God’s Sovereignty over Seemingly “Random” or “Chance” Events**

**Proverbs 16:33** The lot [die] is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

**The 1689 Confession of Faith:** “All things come to pass unchangeably and certainly in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, who is the first cause. Thus, *nothing happens to anyone [or anything] by chance or outside of God’s providence*.”

* **According to His Will among the Inhabitants of the Earth—Preparing for Next Lesson**

**Daniel 4:34-35** At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”

* **How Does the Truth of God’s Sovereignty Help Us?**

**Psalm 16:5-6** “The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.”

**Romans 8:28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

* **Practical Implications**
* **Zealous to Obey and Honor the Lord**

**Philippians 2:12-13** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

* **Lift up in Prayer Our Requests, Cares, and Anxieties to the Lord**

**Psalm 5:3** (NIV1984)In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.

**1 Peter 5:7**[cast] all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** Rejoice always,pray without ceasing,give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

* **Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ**

**Romans 10:1, 14-15, 17 1** Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. **14**How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? **15**And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” **17**So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

**Psalm 97:1** The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice …

**Notes:**