



Parameters of Providence

Lesson Two: God's Power Over Creation

Introduction. Belief in the God of the Bible demands acceptance of the fact that we (and all things around us) are the creation of God.

- A. Yet, acceptance of this fact alone does not answer all the questions we might have regarding the Creator's involvement with His creation.
- B. Has God simply "wound up" creation like some enormous watch and then stepped back from it? Or, does He on a continuing basis involve Himself in additional action in the affairs of creation.

I. Does God Still Exercise Power Over Creation? Two texts establish parameters for us which demand the recognition that God does still maintain and exercise power over creation: Hebrews 1:3 and Colossians 1:17.

A. "Upholding All Things By The Word of His Power" Hebrews 1:3.

Read: Hebrews 1:1-4.

1. This text indicates that God, in Christ, at present "upholds" all things. He does so, "by the word of His power."
2. We can see in the beginning that God had power to speak, and create things by word alone. This powerful word even now "upholds" all things.
3. This does not demand that we understand there to be constant *additional* action on God's part to "uphold" all things. Yet, it does indicate *continued* action.

B. "In Him All Things Consists" Colossians 1:17. Read: Colossians 1:13-17.

1. Just as the Hebrew writer spoke of Christ "upholding" all things, Paul tells the Colossians that all things "consist" from the Greek word *sunistao* meaning to "stand together with" in Christ. In other words, all things *bold together* "in Christ."
2. How many laws of nature and natural processes function all around us every day without us ever thinking about them? Why do they continue? What keeps them from stopping? "In Him all things consist." (cf. Lesson One: Ecc 9:11).
3. As we observed in Hebrews, this doesn't have to mean constant additional action contrary to nature, but it clearly describes continued action.

II. Does God Control Nations? No one can deny that the rise and fall of nations has a dramatic effect on the condition of man on earth. What hand does God have in such things? Two texts teach us some parameters which relate to God's involvement in the nations of men: Daniel 4:17 and Romans 13:4.

A. "The Most High Rules in the Kingdom of Men" Daniel 4:17. Read:

Daniel 4:13-18. Nebuchadnezzar is given this dream and it latter takes place (Daniel 4:28-37).

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1. God wanted Nebuchadnezzar to recognize that “the Most High rules in the kingdom of men.” He is said to give “it to whomever He will.”
2. In the case of Nebuchadnezzar we see one who was a pagan, godless king, and yet God used him to punish Judah (II Kings 25). Does God’s “rule” mean that He made Nebuchadnezzar do what he did? (Note: He is punished for his arrogance.)
3. God chooses the people whom He foreknew would act in a certain way (of their own freewill) to accomplish His plan (cf. Exodus 9:16). God does not make people sin (cf. Lesson One: James 1:13).

B. “He Is God’s Minister, An Avenger To Execute Judgment”

Romans 13:4. Read: Romans 13:1-4.

1. We note that Paul tells the Romans that political authorities are “appointed by God” and act as “God’s minister.”
2. This is interesting in light of the fact that the Roman emperors who reigned at the time would go on after this to destroy the temple, demand that people worship them as Gods and even persecute Christians.
3. God’s “appointment” does not mean that He approves of all that leaders do. Rather, He allows freewill to operate. The extent to which God uses nations to punish other nations in this age is unclear.

III. What Provision Does God Make For His Creation? Finally, we note two texts which address God’s provision for His creation: Matthew 5:45 & Matthew 6:30.

A. “God Sends His Rain On The Just and the Unjust” Matthew

5:45. Read: Matthew 5:43-48. Since God in Christ, “upholds” and “*holds together*” all things, even natural processes such as “rain” are “sent” by God.

1. Again, while this involves *continued* action it does not have to involve *additional* action.

B. “God So Clothes the Grass of the Field” Matthew 6:30. Read:

Matthew 6:25-33. Here God is said to “cloth” the grass of the field (i.e. give to it its splendor and beauty).

1. The process of natural growth in plants and animals only continues by the word of God’s power, but it is not *recreated* daily.
2. Nonetheless, it is God who is credited with “clothing,” “sending,” “ruling” and “appointing” those things which happen within His creation.

Conclusion. It is unscriptural to take a position which denies that God’s power continues to sustain creation. He “sends” rain. He “clothes” the grass of the field. He “appoints” leaders as His “ministers” and “rules” in the kingdoms of men. At the same time, the fact that He is said to sustain “all things” by the “word of His power” indicates to us that we may acknowledge God’s *continued* power without expecting any new and *additional* demonstrations of His power.