

## Colossians 3:16

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,  
teaching and admonishing one another  
in all wisdom,  
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,  
with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*



*This week and next are two occasions for prayer. This week leads up to our annual election of elders and deacons. Next week is the National Day of Prayer. Our devotions this week and next will reflect on the sovereignty of God and prayer. God's sovereignty is a huge incentive to our prayers. The sovereign creator of all things ordains prayer for His glory and our benefit.*

### **Reflections from Scripture on the Sovereignty of God, Part I**

#### **God's providence extends to the entire universe.**

***I Chronicles 29:11-12** Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. <sup>12</sup> Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.*

***Psalms 19:1** The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

***Psalms 103:19** The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, his kingdom rules over all.*

***Daniel 4:34-35** For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; <sup>35</sup> 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?"*

***Hebrews 1:3** He upholds the universe by the word of his power.*

#### **God's providence extends over the physical world.**

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

***Psalms 135:6-7** Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. <sup>7</sup> He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightnings for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses.*

***Psalms 147:16-18** He gives snow like wool; he scatters hoarfrost like ashes.*

*<sup>17</sup> He hurls down his crystals of ice like crumbs; who can stand before his cold?*

*<sup>18</sup> He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow and the waters flow.*

***Psalms 148:8** ... fire and hail, snow and mist, stormy wind fulfilling his word!*

***Matthew 8:26-27** Jesus rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. <sup>27</sup> And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"*

## **God's providence extends over the affairs of nations:**

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

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

*Proverbs 21:1* The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.

*Acts 17:26-27* And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,<sup>27</sup> that they should seek God.

## **Song**

*Psalms 59:16* But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.

[You can Google the hymn to hear it if you would like to sing along.]

### ***God Moves In a Mysterious Way***

(by William Cowper, member of John Newton's church. He struggled with depression and anxiety, this hymn is his declaration of faith in the midst of his struggles.)

God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform;  
he plants his footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill  
he treasures up his bright designs, and works his sov'reign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; the clouds ye so much dread  
are big with mercy, and shall break in blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust him for his grace;  
behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding ev'ry hour;  
the bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flow'r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan his work in vain;  
God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain.

("God Moves in a Mysterious Way" words by William Cowper and music by William Croft © Public Domain CCLI# 358926 Streaming License #20317932)

## **Prayer**

*II Chronicles 7:14* If my people, who are called by my Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Holy Father, you are the Almighty God of all creation, you rule and reign. There is nowhere that we can go to escape your power and presence. Your purposes are being accomplished in all the earth. Your sovereign power gives us confidence to appeal to you in prayer. You have created us for yourself and for your glory, and you delight to answer our prayers for the sake of your glory.

Father, forgive us for being so self-centered. Everything we say and do should be radically You-centered. Forgive us when we come to worship expecting to get something, rather than to focus all our attention on you. Forgive us when we go through our days with some sort of sense of entitlement, like you owe us. Forgive us for our whining disappointments when you don't meet our expectations. We are not the center

of the universe, you are. And even if you never answer another prayer we ever pray, yet will we worship you for you are worthy.

We come before your throne in prayer and humble ourselves and bow down. We acknowledge that you are God, the glory of your greatness covers the whole earth, but often we are too self-absorbed to know it or see it.

Raise us from the dead, from the death of living for ourselves, from the death of our own small purposes, from the death of our pettiness. Raise us to newness of life in the power of your Spirit and in the power of your salvation and your Word. Transform us by the renewing of our minds.

We humbly ask for your perfect will to be done as you sovereignly rule and over rule in the choosing of new elders and deacons for your church. You know all things, you know the hearts of men, you know the future needs of our church. For you glory set apart those specific men we will best glorify you and serve our flock at this time.

Father of glory we pray as Paul prayed, "give us your spirit of wisdom and of revelation that we might have greater knowledge of you, open the eyes of our hearts, that we may know the hope to which you have called us, what are the riches of your glorious inheritance for all the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of your power toward us who believe, that we might know that same power that raised Jesus from the dead" (Ephesians 1:17-20).