

Systematic Theology session 13  
The Doctrine of God, "I Am Who I Am," Part 7

- God's divine activity of providence.
  - Divine providence: God's preserving and governing of His creation.
  - Providence includes:
    - The fact that God has a purpose for creation.
    - The fact that God has a plan to carry out His purpose.
    - The fact that God continuously and actively upholds and preserves all things.
    - The fact that God is present in His creation to govern all things.
    - The fact that God directs all things to the sure accomplishment of His goal.
- God warns in Scripture that general providence will one day come to an end; the day of judgment will come. Unbelievers will scoff at this, but they fail to look back at the Flood to see that God can and will punctuate history with judgment.
  - God is not slow to fulfill His promise. God is always on-plan, and He will complete His plan at the day He has decreed from eternity.
- Special providence.
  - While general providence currently benefits everyone, only believers (the church) are the subject of God's special providence.
  - Christ builds His church, guards His church, and leads His church according to His divine plan.
  - The church will be overwhelmingly victorious, despite how it may look now. This is not because of our own strength, but because of the strength of Christ who directs special providence to us.
  - Christ directs His special providence toward us as individual believers, from the "day of our visitation" (the day that redemption is applied to us), to our deaths.
  - Even the day of our death is precious in the sight of the Lord.
  - God is with us even in days of "hard providences." The prosperity gospel falsely teaches that hard circumstances must always be our fault, due to lack of faith.
    - But this false doctrine of "we can have our best life now" is "over-realized eschatology," which is trying to pull the full manifestation of the eternal state into this present life.
    - We are currently living in the state of the "already and not yet."
      - The "already" is the fact that God has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.
      - The "not yet" will be our eternal resurrected state, when we will have the full manifestation of all blessing, leaving behind all suffering and sin.
    - Our suffering in this world is not meaningless. It is part of the normal Christian life.
      - Suffering as a believer is part of God's process for our good.
      - This purpose for suffering is a promise given only to believers.