

## Belgic Confession, Article 13, "Providence"

Scripture Lesson: Psalm 139

<b>Lesson Aim</b>	To understand three things: First, that God is in control of all things but is not the author of sin. Second, that God's actions surpass human understanding. Third, that the doctrine of Providence gives us unspeakable consolation.
<b>Steps to Learning</b>	Read <a href="#">Belgic Confession, Article 13</a> and <a href="#">Psalm 139</a> . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may work best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
<b>Discuss</b>	<p><b>What are the two aspects of providence, which make up its definition?</b> Preservation and governance. Preservation refers to God's maintenance of everything that he has created. Governance refers to the purpose and design of his control over all things and people.</p> <p><b>What is divine concurrence or compatibilism?</b> This refers to the fact that God's control over all, including people, is compatible with the free decisions and actions of people; God's control and people's decisions are not in tension.</p> <p><b>What are the key biblical texts that we discussed that prove compatibilism?</b> The Joseph stories in <a href="#">Genesis chapters 37-47</a> and <a href="#">Acts 2:23</a>.</p> <p><b>God ordains or allows evil to occur in the life for his own purposes in the context of a fallen world; this is beyond our understanding. How should we think about this?</b> The Belgic confession gives us the answer: "As to his actions surpassing human understanding, we will not curiously inquire farther than our capacity allows us."</p> <p><b>How does understanding the providence of God help us?</b> Belgic confession: "This doctrine gives us unspeakable consolation for we learn thereby that nothing can happen to us by chance, but only by the direction of our gracious heavenly Father."</p>
<b>Bible Reading</b>	<a href="#">Numbers chapters 10-14</a> [Israel attempts to enter the Promised Land] (covering the great Bible stories)