

Each week of 2019 we will take a brief look at one or two questions from the Westminster Shorter Catechism. To read previous weeks' briefs go to [oakhillpca.com/wsc](http://oakhillpca.com/wsc)

Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?

A. *God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.*

Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?

A. *When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.*

God executes his decrees through the works of creation and providence. In other words, God does what he does to foreordain whatsoever comes to pass through creation and providence. Last week we considered the two Catechism questions that speak about God's work of creation. Now the Catechism directs our attention to God's works of providence.

Providence speaks about God's sovereign directing and preserving of all creatures and activity. As the Lord of creation, God has the right to command, direct, and ordain everything. The Bible affirms this in multiple places.

**Hebrews 1:3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and ***he upholds the universe by the word of his power.***

**Nehemiah 9:6** You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and ***you preserve all of them;*** and the host of heaven worships you.

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

God's providential care for creation is not uniformly applied to all his creatures. Humans, God's special creation in his image, have a special form of providence: God's covenant. In the Garden of Eden, God made a covenant with Adam and Eve. There was a stipulation to follow with promises of reward for obedience and punishment for disobedience.

The Shorter Catechism calls this the "Covenant of Life." Other places it is called the "Covenant of Works," emphasizing the need to work to fulfill the obligation. God promises eternal life for obedience and warns of death for disobedience. We'll learn more of this covenant in the following questions and how well Adam and Eve performed (you probably already know the end of that story).

For now, it is important to understand that God's established covenants (spoiler alert! there is more than one covenant) with mankind as a work of his providential care of us.