

HC 27-28 – Confidence in Providence

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: To many people in the west, with all our knowledge, power, and wealth, the doctrine of God's providence is disgusting, even repulsive 令人厌恶 Why do they find it so repulsive? This doctrine, that God controls every thought and every action, is abhorrent 可惡 to many because it destroys the supremacy of man. It is not therefore a surprise that man has diligently tried in this post-modern era to kill God – or at least declare him dead.

The Christian welcomes this doctrine – especially when it is properly explained, understood, and applied. But that's where the difficulty comes! Some don't teach or understand well. And when they don't properly understand it, they rob themselves of its blessing and rob God of his praise. So give attention to God's Word regarding God's providence.

Our headings are:

God Explains Providence

Man Applies Providence

Our goals are: That upon properly understanding that God rules and controls over every creature and every action, that you will then stop worrying about what you can't control, that you will start worshipping God better, and that you will school your children in this doctrine so they can enjoy its benefits.

God Explains Providence

27 Q. WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD?

A. Providence is the almighty and ever present power of God by which he upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty – all things, in fact, come to us not by chance but from his fatherly hand.

1. One dictionary defines providence as: The guardianship and control exercised by a deity. But who is this deity? Only Christians can fill in who this Deity is. Providence is Jehovah's great and ever present power by which he keeps and controls all things and all people. So when you don't get the job you want, that is God's providence. Later when you find out that that company folded...and you end up with a better job...that is God's providence. (Not Allah's or Brahma's). If you miss the bus, that is God's providence. If you get on the bus and you get into an accident, that is God's providence.

2. Because Jehovah controls all things and all people, nothing spins off into space in some meaningless direction. There is nothing that a man can do that is out of God's control. No one can escape God's eyes and hands. He controls the loose wheels on semi-truck and directs it to where it makes a stop. Consider what Jeremiah wrote:

Jeremiah 23: 23 "Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, "And not a God afar off? 24 Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.

President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau cannot be independent of God's providence, though they may act like they are by their actions. When God wishes, he raises up. When God wishes, he brings down. Wouldn't it be great if President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau understood this!

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

Scientists might announce a new scientific law and you might admire it, but scientists only discover what God had put in place already. And God controlled the elements of that scientific fact. The earth did not start to go around the sun when man discovered it. Uranium did not develop explosive 爆炸 properties when man started making bomb. God even moves the heart of the most wicked...unlike what Muslims believe – that there are some sins that Allah cannot forgive...and he has to go to the victim and ask him to forgive the guilty person!

3. Even the tiniest things are in Jehovah's control and he has an established purpose for it.

Matthew 10:29 "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. 30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Do you know how many hairs fall from your head everyday...unless you have none? Each hair has a number. No one can move a finger or a thought without your Father's providential control.

Job 1:12 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

God controls a drop of rain that falls...and he has a purpose for that drop of rain.

God does not simply provide food for you, but there is a purpose behind his provision of food.

4. God rules by his providence using various methods. He may use people, he may use things, or he may work by his own miraculous means and avoid human means altogether.

Jeremiah 5: 24 They do not say in their heart, "**Let us now fear the LORD our God, Who gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season.**" He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest."

God may use what appears to be chance...but is not. Sometimes God just says in the word and it is done. Hebrews 1:1-3.

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

5. Consider one of the peculiar ways God works providentially: A man may not have done something bad

but God still ordains指定 troubles for him. The Bible rejects karma因果报应

John 9: 1 Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "**Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.**"

But yet there is a definite predictability about how God may work. Consider some examples:

a. If you are lazy and don't fix the hole in your roof, you will get snow on your bed. God may providentially cause it not to snow, but that is not his usual way of operating.

b. If you eat and don't work or don't exercise you will probably gain weight and get sick. It may be that you still stay like Enoch but that is not how providence usually works.

c. If you don't take your medicines you will probably get sicker. Can God make you survive without your medicines? Yes. Does he usually do so? No.

d. If you are a foolish Christian who plays with poisonous snakes in worship, you are likely to get bitten and die. Could God save you from being bitten...or from getting to a hospital? Yes. Does he normally do that? No.

Man Applies Providence

28 Q. HOW DOES THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S CREATION AND PROVIDENCE HELP US?

A. We can be **patient when things go against us,** **thankful when things go well,** and for the future we can **have good confidence in our faithful God** and Father that nothing will separate us from his love. All creatures are so completely in his hand that without his will they can neither move nor be moved.

1. Because God, your heavenly Father, providentially rules over every creature and every action, you can be patient when things don't go the way you might expect them to go. You know you are his child and he will do what is best for you. This is why Job was able to say what he did...though he experienced great hardships in his life.

Job 1: 21 And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD." 22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

Apostle James explained that **you who are God's children through Jesus Christ could even look forward to troubles,** knowing that God will **bless you for patiently enduring troubles.** So if you lose your job, or if your computer crashes, if you get really sick, or if you lose your cell phone, if you fail a grade in school, if someone backs into your car in the parking lot this morning and didn't say, if your plants die because of hot weather, or any other trouble you may experience...remember James:

James 1: 2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the **testing of your faith produces patience.**

2. Because God, your heavenly Father, providentially rules over every creature and every action, you can be thankful when things go well. Don't take the credit; give the credit. This was very specifically explained to the Israelites before they entered into the Promised Land. This must be part of your daily lifestyle. Thank God often. Don't take credit that belongs to the Lord. What do you have that you have not received?

Deuteronomy 8: 10 "When you have eaten and are full, then **you shall bless the LORD your God** for the good land which He has given you.

3. Because God, your heavenly Father, providentially rules over every creature and every action, you can have confidence in God that he will keep you safe forever.

Psalm 55: 22 Cast your burden on the LORD, **And He shall sustain you**; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

What amazing confidence you can have in your Father. No one is able to move the righteous. You have a place in God's family and your name is registered in heaven. It is irrevocable 不可逆转.

Romans 5: 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, **knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.** 5 Now hope does not disappoint...

God's Word and Spirit reassure you that God your Father will not leave you alone. Jesus did not die for you to leave you. So you work, live, eat, marry, and have and raise kids...because God rules.

Romans 8: 38 ... neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

4. Since God's rules the world by his providence, and since you can be patient in trial, and since you can be thankful in prosperity 财富, and since you can be confident in the future, you then have nothing to fear. Yes, you must work (providence does not take away responsibility), but you are not to fear.

5. Because providence is so dear and useful, Apostle Paul used it as an evangelistic 传福音 tool. He

reminded the Athenians that Jehovah God was the Creator and the Keeper of all things and persons. So don't hide this doctrine. The world needs to put their trust in the one who sustains the world.

Acts 17: 24 "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. [26]" And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

Conclusion:

What a beautiful doctrine "providence" is! God the Father – *your Father* – rules every creature – every action – and nothing happens out of his will.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: Knowing this doctrine:

1. Don't fear and don't worry. Know who your Father is able to do what he promised to do for you. Be thankful when things go well. Be patient when they don't.

2. Don't put unreasonable pressure on yourself trying to control things that you can't. Put your confidence in God's promises. (If you get cancer, you either will get better or you will die – but you are still God's child. If you lose your phone, either you find it back, buy a new one, or learn to live without. But you have a permanent phone line to heaven...and it is pre-paid...and unlimited. If you miss the bus you might be fired from your job, but God never terminates your citizenship in heaven. Instead of worrying, let this doctrine cause you to worship God better. He is the one who truly cares for you.

3. Teach this doctrine to your children. They are facing many pressures in today's world. Remind them that God controls all things. They have their responsibility to study hard, but they don't need to be worried. God will provide for them.

4. Why would you not fear or worry? Why should you not put unreasonable pressure on yourself? Why must you teach this doctrine to your children? Because you are the blood bought children of God through Jesus.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you have reason to be worried. You don't have God's promises to do what is best for you. But you can fix that if you ask God to make you his child on account of his satisfying his wrath愤怒 in Jesus. Christ died for the sins of all those who truly call on God to be saved!