

## Biblical Theology by Dr. Chuck Baynard

### Lesson 9 (HCLD 9)<sup>1</sup>

**Preparation:** Begin and end each study time with prayer. Pay particular attention to the background reading and pray over each passage asking God to reveal Himself to you.

**Background Reading:** Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 1, 2, 3

**Vocabulary:** Providence, Sovereignty

**Question:** What are God's works of providence? How does it affect angels and men? Is there a difference between God's providence for angels and men?

**Answer:** God's works of providence are his most holy,[a] wise,[b] and powerful preserving [c] and governing [d] all his creatures; ordering them, and all their actions,[e] to his own glory.[f]

Providence is the reality of life with all other theories or beliefs of man the deceit of the devil or of the sinful nature of man himself. There are few people who do not believe in providence though they may deny providence or call it something else. Most pagan religions believe in destiny to one degree or another with most believing in an unchangeable destiny. Often we hear people who have no declared religion speak of a person being spared by God from some disaster because God has a purpose for them.

Providence is not the same as the decree of God whereby God in counsel with Himself for the purpose of His own glory alone elected some to eternal life in Christ. I only teach one decree and that is the decree of election. Since only those whom God elected will ever truly know God and be brought to salvation through grace by faith which is a gift of God; God did not have to make a decree of reprobation. Election as such then has nothing to do with providence. Providence refers to how God orders all things so that even the evil things bring glory to God. There are no accidents with God or things of such insignificance

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<sup>1</sup> The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 9

Q26: What do you believe when you say: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth"?

A26: That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of nothing made heaven and earth with all that in them is,[a] who likewise upholds and governs the same by His eternal counsel and providence,[b] is for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father,[c] in whom I so trust as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul;[d] and further, that whatever evil He sends upon me in this troubled life, He will turn to my good;[e] for He is able to do it, being Almighty God,[f] and willing also, being a faithful Father.[g]

[a] Gen. 1:31; Psa. 33:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 11:3

[b] Psa. 104:2-5; 115:3; Matt. 10:30; Heb. 1:3; Acts 17:24-25

[c] John 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5-7; Eph. 1:5; 3:14-16; Matt. 6:8

[d] Psa. 55:22; 90:1-2; Matt. 6:25-26; Luke 12:22-24

[e] Rom. 8:28; Acts 17:27-28

[f] Rom. 10:12

[g] Matt. 7:9-11; Num. 23:19

they are not included in God's ordering of all things for His own glory. For example, God did not decree before the foundation of the earth I would have a huge breakfast filled with calories and other things bad for my health this morning. God knew what I would have for breakfast this morning and so ordered it that it worked for His glory. Could I have had a different breakfast? My answer is yes, but many will say that changes the will of God therefore no. How can God know and be involved in the smallest details of life and any changes be allowed? A decree is an *official* declaration by a person in authority. A decree cannot change without reflecting upon the immutability of the person issuing the decree. How a decree is carried out however can be subject to some variation as long as the decree is not violated. Suppose God issued a decree that all mankind would visit Los Angeles before they died. Such a decree would not mean every person took the same route or means of transportation, but every person would have to visit Los Angeles.

God decreed the election and then so ordered all things to work for the good of the elect, that is that all things that happen will lead the elect to the foot of Calvary (New Testament perspective) and eternal life in Christ. When weighed in perspective then there is no event of life in the flesh that isn't of lesser good so to speak than the ultimate resting place of the immortal soul. Thus human misery and disaster can and do work for the good of the elect. An anecdote from my own life will perhaps explain this. I spent two years in the Viet Nam conflict. The misery and human suffering there amid the worst of man's inhumanity to man left many with visions of horror so carved into their souls they will not ever be forgotten, at least this side of the grave. There was no good from my point of view to anything that was involved in that nightmare. Yet, it was there I learned first hand the real meaning of loneliness, fear, death, despair, and many other negative human emotions. Remove the experience and I would not be who and what I am today. God has used these experiences to help me have true empathy and be able to comfort many others in my ministry. The horror of Viet Nam in its own way made me appreciate the hope of Christ and the world to come in a very tangible way. Was the experience of war for good? Yes, both in this life and the next because of the providence of God. Could God have used me to reach the same people in the same way if I had never had that experience? Yes, God's plan does not depend upon any voluntary act of anyone outside Himself. God uses all things for His own glory. Was my presence in Viet Nam an event that could have been changed? Yes because it was not a decree. I know and could share a hundred situations I should not have walked away from during those two years. It is subjective perhaps, but I am positive that God for His own reasons put His hand between me and harm there that I might be writing this lesson today. In the ordering of human events by God there are men left dead in that jungle that I might live. Did this come about because I was a believer and they were not? I doubt that, it came about because this outcome fit the plan of God for the salvation of the elect. In this context the greater reward would have been for God to not have placed his hand between me and the death that was on all sides. To the believer to remain here is but loss and to be with God gain all.

Notice this does not remove the responsibility of the person to do their part also. I am alive because God both enabled a steady hand and ability to react appropriately while at the same time causing the opposite reactions in those who would have harmed me. This in addition to the times that God miraculously protected me. I am was not a hero and know the scared youngster behind the trigger in those distant days. However, I knew by the

grace of God when to shoot, when to run, and when to just lie still while the enemy passed me by. Likewise we make use of the knowledge God has given us when facing all situations in life and act accordingly. Thus, I submitted to the surgeon's knife not because God could not, or would not heal me otherwise, or that God willed me to be thus cut upon, but because these too are provided by God for our use. We use the resources God provides trusting Him for the ultimate outcome to be for our own good and His glory.

One of the greatest blessings in my life was a trip to eastern Europe in the spring of 1999. I found there faith in a poverty stricken and persecuted people I had only previously read about. The simple and literal application of the Bible by these people was beyond anything I had ever dreamed possible. It was a living faith that was visible in all these people said or done. Almost immediately upon my return to the USA my health began to fail. A blood screen taken in the summer of 1999 showed that not one single test was normal. Sugars were off the scale, the thyroid was almost double what it should have been and the pituitary was as low as the thyroid was high. At one point I could not distinguish my own hand as my vision also failed. My mind began to do all sorts of weird things. I could lose hours or even a day at times. I would wake up at night and not only not know my name, but not know where I was or who this woman in my bed was. Doubt and fears abounded and became a way of life. Death would have been a welcome relief at times. Part of the regimen to correct the blood chemistry was diet and exercise. I lost over forty pounds and was exercising daily. By Christmas I was in better health than I had been in a couple of decades. Yet January lay ahead, when I had to have a hip replaced and bone grafts to repair holes in the pelvic bone.

What has all this personal testimony have to do with providence? Without the trip and experience of Eastern Europe I do not think my faith would have held through the summer of 1999. The faith of the people there gave me the encouragement I needed to face my worst nightmare in a simple dependence on God that all is for good. Without the failing health and fear of the summer and fall of 1999 I would have been in no shape to handle surgery in January of 2000. Because of that surgery a constant pain that had steadily increased for twenty-five years and had reached a point of being unbearable was removed. God was present in the smallest of details and brought me through every moment of every day by providing what I needed before I needed it. I needed faith, God sent me to Eastern Europe. I needed to get in shape to handle a serious surgical procedure, God sent me ill health. I needed relief from pain and God gave me skilled caretakers that had me back in the pulpit (sitting) within two weeks. I needed no pain killers after the first six days, even with a complete hip replacement and two bone grafts. Providence is the reality, all other is but shadow and illusion.

I am beating this to death for a reason. If providence is the same thing as predestination man is no more than a robot and there is no glory to God which violates the reason God created all things. Prayer will not work, it is no more than what God has predetermined we will do under a predetermined circumstance. Foreknowledge and predestination are not the same thing. God knew I would be in Viet Nam and used that to teach me things I doubt I could have been learned any other place. God has used every experience in my life for His own glory and used me to reach out and comfort others even as God has comforted me. God blesses His own that they might be a blessing. Could God

have used another or even me with a different life experience? Absolutely, but God chose this way and gave me the ability to understand another by experience so true empathy exists.

**Concerning Angels:** God by his providence permitted some of the angels, wilfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation,[a] limiting and ordering that, and all their sins, to his own glory;[b] and established the rest in holiness and happiness;[c] employing them all,[d] at his pleasure, in the administrations of his power, mercy, and justice.[e]<sup>2</sup>

God controlled even the rebellion of Satan and the fallen angels. God protected two thirds of the angels from the lies of Satan and preserved them in holiness. Note there is no plan of salvation for the angels though they were created spirit and as such superior in creation to man. The holy angels cannot sin because God has so ordered it that they will be preserved in holiness forever. The fallen angels cannot repent and return to the presence of God. The difference in providence of angels and men is that the angels like man were created with the ability to sin or not, but unlike man the holy angels were protected by the direct intervention of God in preventing sin, not in restoring that which was lost because of sin.

**Concerning Man:** The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created, was the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth;[a] putting the creatures under his dominion,[b] and ordaining marriage for his help;[c] affording him communion with himself;[d] instituting the Sabbath;[e] entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience,[f] of which the tree of life was a pledge;[g] and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.[h]<sup>3</sup>

God created man perfect and holy but with the ability to sin just like he created the angels (meaning condition not method of creation, the Bible doesn't tell us how God created the angels). Like the angels man of his own choice sinned and fell from grace (the presence of God). Unlike the angels God had decreed that some men would be saved before the creation of the earth. Immediately upon the fall of man God begins to reveal His plan of redemption to mankind. While still in the garden during the curse of Satan, not mankind, God introduced the coming savior.<sup>4</sup> Notice that from the beginning of time

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<sup>2</sup> [a] Jude 1:6; II Peter 2:4; Heb. 2:16; John 8:44

[b] Job 1:12; Matt. 8:31

[c] I Tim. 5:21; Mark 8:38; Heb. 12:22

[d] Psa. 104:4

[e] II Kings 19:35; Heb. 1:14

<sup>3</sup> [a] Gen. 2:8, 15-16

[b] Gen. 1:28

[c] Gen. 2:18

[d] Gen. 1:26-29; 3:8

[e] Gen. 2:3

[f] Gal. 3:12; Rom. 10:5

[g] Gen. 2:9

[h] Gen. 2:17

<sup>4</sup> Gen 3:15

(creation) God has prepared and given to man everything that man needed and that God would require of mankind. Man was created last that all things of creation needed by man would first be in place. Man was given the ability not to sin, but unlike the holy angels was not prevented from sinning. One of the most remarkable verses in the Bible is Genesis 4:7 where God says to Cain, that Cain has the power to rule over sin. Even the reprobate cannot claim he was led astray by Satan, because the reprobate has the power to not sin. Original sin and all that has come from that foul well are by the choice of the created, not to be laid to the charge of any other, even the devil. God however will use the sinful choices of His own elect or the reprobate to the end that He is glorified.

Prayer works because providence is not a decree and can be changed. By providence God brings about all that will happen and so orders the events of life to work for the good of His elect. With this in mind, the shortest way through any trial is to thank God for the mercy shown in the affliction or adversity, because it all works for your good and the glory of God. We see this in the outline of life we find in Romans 5:1-6. In this passage we find that we are to glory in tribulation. That is harder to do than pray for our enemies. Yet it is a truth that God inhabits the praise of His people and in glorifying God in tribulation we learn patience, and from patience comes experience which in turn gives us hope, that we might know the love of God by the Holy Spirit that dwells within our heart.

In the military we were taught that the safest way out of an ambush was to charge into the teeth of the ambush. In trusting God and His providence we find the safest way through the trials and tribulations of human life are into the midst of the adversity praising God for the opportunity to suffer even as our Lord did. Once more, providence is the reality, God is in control of all things and all things will work for the good of the elect and the glory of God.

## **Suggested Sermon Outline**

### **What do you believe when you say: "I believe In God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?"**

That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth with all that is In then, who also upholds and governs them by His eternal counsel and providence, is for the sake of Christ His Son my God and my Father. I trust in Him so completely that I have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul. Moreover, whatever evil He sends upon me in this troubled life He will turn to my good, for He is able to do it, being almighty God, and Is determined to do it, being a faithful Father.

#### ***1. God Created the World***

**A. God's creative interest is the context for reality.** [A Prayer of Moses the man of God.] Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. (Psalm 90:1-2)

**B. Nothing exists apart from God as an independent reality.** Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; (Isaiah 44:24)

Life does not have neutral zones.

**C. Reality cannot be understood correctly apart from God's creation.** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. in him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended It not. (John1: 1-5)

**D. Whatever may lie beyond the reality we know is still a product of the same God who gave us the Bible.** By The word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. (Psalm 33:6)

### *II. All of Reality Follow's the Maker's Design*

**A. God directs the world by providence, leaving nothing to chance.** Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. (Matthew 10:29)

**B. Redemptive history displays the same providential interest which appears in physics and the laws, God uses to direct the material reality.** God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down hand on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (Hebrews 1:1-3)

**C. The design of die Creator's providence never moves far from Jesus.** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received The Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: (Romans 8:15-16)

### *III. Believers Face Life Confidently*

**A. Jesus taught believers to be confident.** Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you,

That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, o ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things (to the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first The kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. (Matthew 6:25-34)

Do not encourage fear and allow worry to rob you.

**B. The Creator uses all the events of your life for His good purposes and in your best interest.** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

**C. When the Creator is so much greater than we are it is offensive to expect less of Him than of ourselves.** Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? if ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (Matthew 7:9-11)

**D. Put anxiety where it belongs.** And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. (Luke 12:22)

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Lord's Day 009  
Question 26