

The Providence of God!

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Bible Text: Nehemiah 9:6-20

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Take your Bibles now and turn with me, if you will, to the book of Nehemiah and look at chapter 9, if you will, for just a few moments and look with me at verse 6 down through verse 19.

6 Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. 7 Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; 8 And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and made a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous: 9 And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red sea; 10 And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day. 11 And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters. 12 Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. 13 Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: 14 And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant: 15 And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them. 16 But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, 17 And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon,

gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. 18 Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations; 19 Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go. 20 Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

Our subject today is: The Providence of God. In these days of free-willism and man exaltation, little or nothing is known or taught about the great subject of the Providence of God. In place of giving the Lord the honor due to his name, mankind takes the credit or else attributes events to luck or chance. This is true even in religious circles because of the appalling ignorance regarding the Providence of God.

You answer this question, if you will: when was the last time you heard a message on the Providence of God? You preachers listening to me, for many of you do: when was the last time you preached on this great subject? If you never have, you are not giving your people the whole counsel of God and as a consequence they will continue to remain ignorant unless you preach them the great truths of the Bible.

To understand the Providence of God because that's our subject today, we must first know the meaning of the term, therefore, we shall give you two definitions of the term so you will be able to understand what we are speaking of when the word "Providence" is used. During my years in the ministry, I have found out that the average person doesn't understand many of the terms used in Scripture. It is one thing to use big words and many do to impress people but it is another thing to use terms that people can understand. So today we're for a moment or two, we're going to look at the meaning of the term "Providence." The meaning of that term is this: God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose and govern all creatures, actions and things from the greatest to the least by his most wise and holy Providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge and free immutable counsel of his own will to the praise of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness and mercy. This is one meaning of the term "Providence." Then, Providence is that God in his ordaining Providence, maketh use of means yet is free to work without, above and against them at his pleasure. To sum it all up: the Providence of God means that my Lord works all things after the counsel of his will and according to his pleasure and while at the same time he uses the means to do so. When this truth grips the soul, it brings stability in the times of crises, confidence in the times of stress and convictions in the times of great apprehension.

You see, my friend, the Providence of God controls all things, is over all things and works out all things according to the plan of God and for his glory. This will thrill the heart of the true believer but it will alarm the heart of the skeptic if it ever dawns on his soul. No matter who the individual is, let me say this to us: every individual is going to carry out God's purpose. If you die and go to hell, you'll still carry out God's purpose and

you'll die and go to hell to the praise of the glory of God's justice. If God ever saves you and you come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will die and go to heaven unless the Lord raptures us first and then you're saved to the praise of the glory of God's grace. You see, God works all things after the counsel of his will and he works it according to his plan and for his glory. Now, as I've said before, this will thrill the heart of the true believer but it will also alarm the heart of the skeptic if it ever dawns on his soul. Now, what about you at this hour? Do you delight in the Providence of God? Or are you alarmed over it? Your stand is determined by your personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, as we've looked at the meanings of God's Providence for just a moment or two, let's look now at the implications of God's Providence. The implications of God's Providence are many but let me give you one to start with, if I may. First, we are made to see that God hath created all things and now upholds them by the word of his power. "Now Preacher, what in the world are you talking about?" This is exactly what the word of God tells us in the first chapter of the book of Hebrews and verse 3 where we read, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," listen now, "and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Now, what does this mean that God upholds all things by the word of his power? This means it includes the weather, the growth of things, as well as the events of human history and individual life are known, directed and under the plan of God. Right now, we are in the summer season here in Michigan as I'm preaching to you and I'll tell you right now, right at this very outset: I've never in my life in all the years that I've been in the state of Michigan, seen such a corn crop as is coming on at this present hour. Beloved, it's high, it's thick, it's beautiful and it's going to be prodigious with regard to its harvest if God continues to bless it like he is at this present hour. He's upholding all things by the word of his power.

In Revelation 4 and verse 11, we read again these words, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." This is the evidence that God upholds all things by the word of his power. I read to you just a moment ago Hebrews 1 and we find again where it says, "and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." This truth is absolute and positive. It cannot be changed and when one denies the Providence of God. Now, what about you at this hour? Where do you stand with regard to this?

Next, we see the Providence of God is exercised in the realm of nature. None of us would have food to eat or clothes to wear or air to breath if it were not for the Providence of God. Listen to this Scripture, if you will, in Psalm 104, verses 10 down through verse 20. "He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down. Thou

makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth." Here we see in this portion of the Scripture the hand of God revealed for our benefit and yet man is too ignorant and stubborn to acknowledge his dependence upon the Lord God of heaven. However, it doesn't change it one iota. With regard to God's Providence, we see it is exercised in the realm of nature.

Now, let's go a little bit farther with this in regard to the air we breathe. We live in an ocean of air which remains constant. The average constant thing about the air is probably about 14 pound per square inch or so on and we find that it remains constant because we live in an ocean of air which remains constant. While we breathe in fresh air, we constantly give out poison where we breathe out carbon dioxide, a very deadly poison. Yet my Lord in his wisdom and Providence, has it so arranged and controlled that the grasses, the trees and the plants take in this poison and in return give out oxygen so a healthy balance is maintained throughout this earth. This is all under the Providence of our Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not wonder that when we see this, we desire to praise the Lord in all that we do.

The Providence of God is also at work in the realm of nature but we find it is also at work in the events of human history. Now, people are going to jump up and down here and say, "No, God doesn't have control of human history." Well, let me show you very clearly from the word of God that he does. So take your Bibles now and turn with me to Daniel 2 and look with me at verses 19 down through verse 22 where we find these words. Listen to it, "Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said," listen to what he said, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him." Here is a classic example of God's Providence protecting Daniel as well as providing King Nebuchadnezzar with some needed information. What God did then, he does now because the events of human history are all under his control.

Now, you and I better recognize that because if we don't, we're going to go to seed, so to speak, and we're going to throw up our hands and begin to say, "What in the world is coming to pass?" Well, beloved, when we study the word of God and we recognize that God is in control with his Providence, we find very clearly it stabilizes us and enables us to lift up our heads and look up because our redemption who is the Lord Jesus Christ is soon to appear. Some of you might be saying these words at this present hour, "Well, if God is in control, why is there so much trouble in the Middle East and why has Russia become such a dominant power and that everybody is afraid of her?" My friend, if you would study your Bible, you would receive the answer if you'll just read it carefully. Israel has been promised the land of Palestine and let's be assured of one thing: she shall obtain it. Russia one day will invade her but she will meet her Waterloo upon the mountains of Palestine as God has decreed and is now in the process of directing. We who know this watch with anticipation and thrill in our hearts as we see the veracity and faithfulness of God being exhibited. You see, God is in control and is working all things

after the counsel of his will and according to his Providence like Job 12:23, the Scripture says, "He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again."

Last of all, we want to show you very clearly that the Providence of God is revealed in the individual life. "Now Preacher, what in the world are you talking about?" Take your Bibles now and turn to Proverbs 16 and verse 9 where we read these words, "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps." Now, turn to Isaiah 45 and verse 5 where we read again, "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me." Whether you realize it or not, my friend, as I've said before, the Providence of God is directing your steps and you will fulfill the plan and the will of God for your life even if you die and go to hell without Christ. You see, God is in control of all human life and our times are in his hands even though man will not admit it or give God the credit. God's Providence governs all the actions of man and includes the so-called fortunate events, the particulars and universals of life, the free actions of man as well as the sinful actions of mankind.

Turn with me again to the second chapter of Exodus and notice verses 5 through 8 where we read, "And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother." Here is one of the so-called fortunate events which are under God's Providence. Moses was three years old, under a death sentence, the son of slave parents, facing death by drowning or eaten by crocodiles, yet the Lord spared him by causing the daughter of Pharaoh to have compassion on him. She wept when she saw him. His own mother was paid wages to take care of Moses who should have been put to death. Now, some may call this a fortunate event but it still falls under the Providence of God.

You see, my radio friend, God is in charge of all events and controls all the actions going on in this world. Such a great God we can rely upon and trust and what a privilege it is to know him. What about you at this hour? Are you acquainted with the great God of the universe? You can be by repenting of your sin and coming to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. If this is the first time you've heard me, it's due to God's Providence and if you're a regular listener, it's also due to God's Providence. Our purpose is to seek you and to become better acquainted with the Lord. If you already know him and if you don't know him, my hope is that God will bring you unto himself. Until we meet again, this is Pastor Peter Nortier saying, "Good-bye and may the Lord spare you before it's too late."