

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 10, "The Providence of God"

Scripture Lesson: Job 1 and 2

Lesson Aim	To understand the theological significance of the biblical teaching of providence.
Steps to Learning	Read the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 10 and Job 1 and 2 . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>What is a simple definition of providence? Providence is the biblical teaching that God is in control of all things, people, events – everything – in the visible and invisible realms.</p> <p>What is the distinction between miracles and providence? A miracle is a direct action of God, which suspends secondary causes. For example, when God raised Jesus from the dead, no means were used; it was simply the power of God. In providence, however, God works through secondary causes such as biological, chemical and other laws and forces that God created.</p> <p>According to the prologue in the book of Job, Satan makes an argument that Job serves God because he has blessed him with a large family, riches and health. How does Job respond when God allows Satan to take everything from Job including his health? Job receives all the suffering with faith. According to a dialogue later in the book, Job does sin by complaining to God that he had been treated unjustly and calls God's actions into question. But, nonetheless, he still follows God and does not curse him or turn away from him.</p> <p>Why does God pour out rich blessings on Job after the trial is finished? Is it to make up for God's treatment of Job? God pours out rich blessings on Job simply out of God's abundant grace. This was simply God's prerogative as it was when God blessed Job before his trial.</p> <p>How should we think about blessings in this life? The Bible teaches us that material blessings in this life are temporal; they will pass away. Therefore, as Jesus teaches us in Matthew chapter 6, we shall not treasure earthly, material blessings. Instead, we must treasure the realities of belonging to the Kingdom of God in Christ.</p> <p>How should we think about the trials and sufferings of this life? We must believe that God brings them upon us for his own purposes and will turn them to our good. Despite hardship, God remains good and is our faithful Father. We must learn to be patient in adversity and thankful in prosperity. Above all, we must believe that God has demonstrated his love to us in the work of Christ on our behalf.</p>
Bible Reading	Acts 25-28 [The story of the early church] (covering the great Bible stories)