

Grace OPC High School Sunday Class Teaching Notes			
Year:	1 of 4		Date: 11/16/2003
Quarter:	1 of 4	Theology	
Lesson Title:	Providence – part 2		
Lesson Purpose:	To Examine and Understand the Doctrine of Providence and How it Applies in Our Lives		

1. Introduction

Last week we saw that providence means that God foreknows, upholds, directs, disposes, and governs all creatures, actions, and things.

- Creation is a necessary execution of God's decree; providence is a necessary extension of God's creation.
- The purpose of God's providence is the manifestation of His own glory, not the benefit of His creatures.
- God is the first cause of all things and brings them to pass by the use of means or second causes.
- Although God uses means to accomplish His purposes, He is free to work without, above, or against them.
- We know God's past providence in history-biblical and otherwise- and of His future providence by the Bible only.

2. The Extent and Purpose of God's Providence

- In His Providence, God has foreordained the sin of men and angels.
- The providence of God extends even to the fall of Adam and to all the sins of men and of angels.

Rom. 11:32–34 ³² For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. ³³ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! ³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?"

2 Sam. 24:1 Again the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go number Israel and Judah."

1 Chron. 21:1 Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.

1 Kings 22:22–23 ²² "The Lord said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the Lord said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.' ²³ "Therefore look! The Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the Lord has declared disaster against you."

1 Chron. 10:4, 13–14 ⁴ Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and abuse me." But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. ¹³ So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the Lord, because he did not keep the word of the Lord, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. ¹⁴ But he did not inquire of the Lord; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

2 Sam. 16:10 But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the Lord has said to him, 'Curse David.' Who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"

Acts 2:23 "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

Acts 4:27–28 ²⁷ "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together ²⁸ "to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

- God constantly restrains and controls men in their sins.

Ps. 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise You; With the remainder of wrath You shall gird Yourself.

2 Kings 19:28 Because your rage against Me and your tumult Have come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back By the way which you came.

- God overrules sin for good.

Acts 3:13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.

- The end or purpose of God's providence is the manifestation of His glory.

Gen. 50:20 "But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.

Isaiah 10:6–7, 12. ⁶ I will send him against an ungodly nation, And against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, To seize the spoil, to take the prey, And to tread them down like the mire of the streets. ⁷ Yet he does not mean so, Nor does his heart think so; But *it is* in his heart to destroy, And cut off not a few nations. ¹² Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, *that He will say*, "I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks."

- Although the sins of wicked men and angels are controlled by God's providence, God is not the author of their sin.

- This is a mystery we cannot fully understand, but it is plainly taught in the Bible.

James 1:13–14, 17 ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

Psalm 50:21 These things you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, And set them in order before your eyes.

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.

Matt. 8:31–32 ³¹ So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." ³² And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.

3. God's Providence includes the Moral Government of His Church

- While God is most wise, righteous and gracious, He governs His children by allowing them to be tempted and leaving them to the corruption of their own hearts.
- God leaves His children to various temptations and the corruption of their own hearts to chastise or rebuke them for their past sins.
- This also helps us to discover the power of corruption and the deceitfulness of our own hearts.
- God internal spiritual providence includes the influences of His Spirit upon their hearts.

2 Chron. 32:25–26, 31 ²⁵ But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor *shown* him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. ²⁶ Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah. ³¹ However, *regarding* the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was *done* in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all *that was* in his heart.

2 Sam. 24:1 Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

- God raises His children to be more aware of their dependence upon Himself for their support, and to be more dependent upon Him.
- God uses our temptations and corruptions to make us more watchful of future events of sin.

2 Cor. 12:7–9 ⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Psalm 73 Truly God is good to Israel,
To such as are pure in heart.

2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled;

My steps had nearly slipped.
 3 For I was envious of the boastful,
 When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
 4 For there are no pangs in their death,
 But their strength is firm.
 5 They are not in trouble as other men,
 Nor are they plagued like other men.
 6 Therefore pride serves as their necklace;
 Violence covers them like a garment.
 7 Their eyes bulge with abundance;
 They have more than heart could wish.
 8 They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression;
 They speak loftily.
 9 They set their mouth against the heavens,
 And their tongue walks through the earth.
 10 Therefore his people return here,
 And waters of a full cup are drained by them.
 11 And they say, "How does God know?
 And is there knowledge in the Most High?"
 12 Behold, these are the ungodly,
 Who are always at ease;
 They increase in riches.
 13 Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain,
 And washed my hands in innocence.

Psalm 77:1, 10, 12 ¹cried out to God with my voice—To God with my voice; And He gave ear to me. ¹⁰ And I said, "This *is* my anguish; *But I will remember* the years of the right hand of the Most High." ¹² I will also meditate on all Your work, And talk of Your deeds.

Mark 14:66-72 ⁶⁶Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came.

⁶⁷ And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth." ⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed.

⁶⁹ And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is one of them." ⁷⁰ But he denied it again.

And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it."

⁷¹ Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!"

⁷² A second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.

John 21:15-17 ¹⁵ So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

¹⁶ He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?"

And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You."

Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

4. God's Providence includes the Government of Wicked and Ungodly Men

- God blinds and hardens wicked and ungodly men because of their past sins.
- Instead of increasing their understanding, God withholds his grace from them so that they do not understand.

Rom. 1:24, 26, 28

²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

Rom. 11:7-8 ⁷ What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. ⁸ Just as it is written: "God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day."

5. God's Providence Works all Things for the Good of His Church

- God's providence reaches all creatures--men, angels, beasts, fowl, fish, creeping things.
- In a very special way, God cares for the good of His Church, directs all events and all His creatures for its good.

1 Tim. 4:10 For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

Amos 9:8-9 8 "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom, And I will destroy it from the face of the earth; Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob," Says the Lord. 9 "For surely I will command, And will sift the house of Israel among all nations, As grain is sifted in a sieve; Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground.

Rom. 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Isa. 43:3-5, 14 3 For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place. 4 Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored, And I have loved you; Therefore I will give men for you, And people for your life. 5 Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west;

- The history of redemption through all its dispensations, Patriarchal, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Christian, is the key to the philosophy of human history in general. The race is preserved, continents and islands are settled with inhabitants, nations are elevated to empire, philosophy and the practical arts, civilization and liberty are advanced, that the Church, the Lamb's bride, may be perfected in all her members and adorned for her Husband.¹

6. Conclusion

- God not only permits sinful acts, but he directs and controls men and angels in their in their sins for His own purposes.
- Sin comes from the creature – men and angels – only.
- Although God foreordains and controls the sinful acts of men, He is not the author or approver of sin.
- God uses the sins of men and angels for good and the manifestation of His glory.
- God uses temptations and the sins of His people for their good, making them more dependant on Him and watchful of future occasions of sin.
- God uses the temptations and sins of ungodly and wicked men to blind, harden and punish them.
- God cares for His church is a special way by directing and disposing all creatures and events for its good.

¹Hodge, A.A., *The Confession of Faith* (Banner of TruthTrust 1869) p.101