

# The Providence of God

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## 1. Review

- a. The thread of the seed in Genesis
  - i. Victor over the deceiver (3:15)
  - ii. Rest from the curse at Eden (5:29)
  - iii. Blessing to all the nations (12:3; 22:18)
- b. Genesis 24-36: God does not abandon His promise
- c. Attributes of God:
  - i. Goodness
  - ii. Faithfulness and truth
  - iii. Grace
- d. To these we add:
  - i. Providence of God

## 2. Intro

- a. Title for today “The Providence of God”
- b. Definition of providence
  - i. Merriam Webster: “divine guidance or care”
  - ii. More robust definitions
    1. The Belgic Confession (1561)
      - a. We believe that this good God, after creating all things, did not abandon them to chance or fortune but leads and governs them according to his holy will, in such a way that nothing happens in this world without God’s orderly arrangement.
    2. Heidelberg Catechism (1563)
      - a. The almighty, everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were, by his hand, he still upholds heaven and earth with all creatures and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and

poverty, indeed, all things come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.

### 3. Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)

- a. God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

#### iii. A shorter and simpler definition for today:

- 1. Providence is God's wise orchestration of all things (both good, evil, and neutral) to achieve His good will.

#### iv. Common relevance/application of divine providence

#### v. Something far better and deeper

- 1. Eternal blessing of God to all the nations in the promised seed

#### c. Overview

##### i. Partiality

##### ii. Plot

##### iii. Prison

##### iv. Promotion

#### d. Conclude with:

##### i. Four Clarifications

### 3. Partiality

#### a. "These are the generations of Jacob" (37:2)

##### i. Another *Toledoth*

- 1. Immediately follows Esau's generations (36:1ff)
- 2. Much like Ishmael (25:12ff) and Isaac's generations (25:19ff)
- 3. Impressive list followed by divine intervention

#### b. Problem of favoritism

##### i. Jacob favored Joseph because:

1. He was the son of his old age (37:3)
  2. Son of Rachel, the woman he loved (29:18, 20)
  - ii. Favoritism is sinful
  - iii. Overt favoritism is also senseless
    1. Jacob lacked sense
    2. He made Joseph a multicolored coat (“varicolored tunic”)
  - c. Led to hatred of Joseph
    - i. The brother’s hated Joseph (37:4)
      1. For the coat
      2. For giving to Jacob a bad report about them (37:2)
    - ii. They hate him even more for his dreams (37:5)
    - iii. They plot to get rid of him
4. Plot
- a. Brothers’ Location
    - i. Brothers take the flock to Shechem then to Dothan (37:13)
      1. Shechem is 30mi north of Hebron (37:14)
        - a. Perhaps the brothers went there to draw Joseph far away from home to harm him there
      2. Dothan (37:17) is the city through which a caravan of Midianite-Ishmaelite merchants will travel
  - b. Joseph sent to get a report about them (37:14)
    - i. Joseph goes to Shechem then to Dothan
  - c. The brothers’ plot
    - i. They plot to murder Joseph (37:18)
    - ii. But per Reuben, they throw him into a pit instead (37:21-24)
  - d. From brothers to merchants
    - i. As merchants pass by (37:25), Judah has a brilliant idea to sell him (37:26-27) for 20 shekels of silver (37:28)
  - e. From merchants to Potiphar (39:1)
    - i. The LORD is with him (39:2, 3)

- ii. Joseph becomes overseer over Potiphar's house, his head manager (39:4)
  - f. Falsely accused
    - i. But Potiphar's wife try to seduce him (39:7)
    - ii. Joseph resists and ends up being falsely accused (39:17)
    - iii. Potiphar throws him in his prison (39:19-20)
- 5. Prison
  - a. Joseph ends up in the jail meant for Pharaoh's prisoners (39:20)
  - b. The LORD was with Joseph in prison (39:21, 23)
    - i. He became a supervisor over the inmates (39:22)
  - c. Pharaoh's chief cupbearer is restored as Joseph said
    - i. The chief cupbearer and baker offend Pharaoh and he throws them both in that prison (40:1-3)
    - ii. Joseph looked after them in prison (40:4)
    - iii. They were imprisoned there for "some time" (40:4)
    - iv. One morning, they were dejected (40:6)
    - v. They had a dream with no understanding (40:8)
    - vi. Joseph interprets their dreams (40:12-13, 18-19)
    - vii. He asks the cupbearer to get him out of there (40:14-15)
    - viii. Cupbearer is restored per Joseph's interpretation and forgets about him (40:23)
  - d. Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream
    - i. Two years pass (41:1)
    - ii. Pharaoh has dreams (about cows and crops) which none of his magicians or wise men can interpret (41:8)
    - iii. The chief cupbearer recommends Joseph and he is brought before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams (41:13-14)
    - iv. Joseph interpret the dream (seven years of abundance then seven years of famine) and gives Pharaoh advice to prepare for the years of famine (41:25-36)
    - v. Pharaoh promotes him to the highest position in Egypt

## 6. Promotion

- a. Specifics of promotion (41:39-44)
  - i. Authority over all the land of Egypt
  - ii. Pharaoh's signet ring
  - iii. Garments of fine linen
  - iv. Gold necklace
- b. Additionally he was given (41:45)
  - i. Egyptian name: *Zaphenath-paneah*
  - ii. Egyptian wife: *Asenath*
- c. He has two sons by Asenath during the years of plenty
  - i. Manasseh (NASB fn "making/causing to forget")
  - ii. Ephraim ("fruitfulness")
- d. Seven years of famine hit
  - i. Famine in Egypt
    1. Egypt was a refuge during famines in Canaan
      - a. Abraham went there (12:10)
      - b. Isaac wanted to go there (26:1-2)
    2. Nile likely dried up
    3. Some record of cannibalism in Egypt
  - ii. Famine was global (41:56, 57)
    1. Nile originates in central Africa
    2. Famine was widespread
    3. Like the global flood in its scope and its deliverance
    4. Canaan also affected
  - iii. Brothers face trouble in Egypt
    1. They come to buy food
    2. They do not recognize Joseph
      - a. 20 years had passed
        - i. 17 years when sold

- ii. Now 37 years old
  - 1. 30 when he interpreted Pharaoh's dream (41:46)
  - 2. 7 years of famine
- b. Different name
- c. Had an interpreter
- d. Spoke to him from a distance (45:4)
- 3. Joseph accuses them of espionage (42:9)
- 4. Joseph sends all of them to prison for three days then lets nine to go back home and to bring back Benjamin to prove their innocence (42:20)
- 5. The brothers express remorse for their treatment of Joseph (42:21-22)
- iv. They return with Benjamin
  - 1. Jacob is unwilling to let them take Benjamin (42:38)
  - 2. Judah offers himself as surety for Benjamin (43:9)
  - 3. Jacob agrees to let him go with them (43:13-14)
  - 4. Joseph frames Benjamin to retain him (44:2)
  - 5. Judah offers to swap places with Benjamin (44:33-34)
- v. Joseph reveals himself (45:3)
  - 1. Explains God had sent him to preserve them (45:4-8a)
  - 2. Joseph understood the providence of God
- vi. Immigration
  - 1. Joseph sends for his father and family
  - 2. God's direction
    - a. Jacob first goes to Beersheba and he worships God (46:1)
    - b. God affirms to Jacob that he should go to Egypt and He promises to bring him back to Canaan (46:2-4)
  - 3. Settle in Goshen

- a. So the entire family immigrates to Egypt and settles in Goshen, all 70 of them (46:27)
    - b. Joseph gets Pharaoh to agree to settle them there also (47:1-12)
  - 4. Prosperity
    - a. In contrast to Egyptians who are impoverished (47:23)
    - b. Israel acquires land and becomes numerous (47:27)
- 7. Four clarifications on chapters 48-50
  - a. Joseph is not singularly given the Abrahamic covenant.
    - i. Joseph is given the firstborn's blessing of double inheritance which Reuben forfeited through incest (1 Chron. 5:1-2)
    - ii. Judah is given the position of leadership
  - b. Judah is given the preeminent position of leadership.
    - i. Judah holds the scepter/ruler's staff (49:10)
    - ii. "Shiloh" is Messianic and it means "he comes to whom it [scepter] belongs"
    - iii. Out of Judah will come the Lion of Judah, the king of the Jews, the King of the Judeans, to whom will "be the obedience of the peoples" (worldwide obedience per Dan. 7:14).
  - c. Jacob longed for salvation in Jesus.
    - i. This is seen in 49:18
    - ii. This comes at the end of the prophetic blessing for Dan (49:16-18)
    - iii. Dan is the first of the concubine sons, after all six sons of Leah are first addressed
    - iv. After the four sons of concubinage, the sons of Rachel are addressed
    - v. Dan is affirmed as one of the tribes of Israel (49:16), thus legitimizing the sons of concubinage to be equal to the sons of Leah and Rachel.
    - vi. At the end of these words regarding Dan, Jacob lifts up a prayer in 49:18 with the words, "For Your salvation I wait, O LORD."
      - 1. The word for salvation is *Yeshua*.
      - 2. *Yeshua* is the Hebrew word for "Jesus" which means "the LORD saves."

3. Unbeknownst to him, Jacob cries out for Jesus as he contemplates the salvation to be revealed at the end of the days (49:1).
- d. God's ultimate purpose for preserving Jacob's family was to send Christ
    - i. Three reasons why this looks ahead to the coming of Christ
      1. Exegetically
        - a. This story of providence fits into a bigger story that began in Genesis 3:15
        - b. The preservation of Jacob's family means the promise of the seed is alive. The Savior is still coming.
      2. Theologically
        - a. God sovereignly rules over all
          - i. Psalm 103:19
          - ii. Eph. 1:11
          - iii. Rom. 8:28
        - b. The aim of providence is Christ
          - i. Eph. 1:10
        - c. This means theologically speaking the providence of God ultimately brings all things to culminate in Christ
      3. Christologically
        - a. John 5:46
        - b. Luke 24:27
        - c. The main message of the OT is Jesus Christ.
        - d. The ultimate reason why God preserves Israel is to bring forth the Savior to save His elect among the nations and the remnant of Israel.