

### **Doctrine of Providence**

1. At an earlier time in America's history, people were familiar with the concept of God's providence, and spoke about it freely in their conversations and correspondences.
2. The word "providence" came to be used as a name for God, and not merely to refer to His divine care.
3. In the eighteenth century, even Deism recognized that God was necessary to explain the ultimate origin of the universe. After that, God was dismissed, and His providence was emphasized through the Law of Nature. God was likened to a cosmic Watchmaker.
4. Deism vanquished the idea of God being actively involved in the daily affairs of the world. That idea has persisted to the present hour.
5. With the banishment of providence, people are not God conscious in private, or in public. Life can be summarized in the song "Kay Sura Sura", whatever will be, will be.
6. Legally, in America, people are free to believe in God, and speak of His providence, provided are references to God that are reserved to a cultural reservation. Conversations about God cannot be part of the general public discourse on government property, such as public schools, courthouses, and universities.
7. In America, and in the Western world, religion is something for the edification of the soul, but it has no bearing on economics, government, or education.
8. For a brief moment, on September 11, 2001, modern Deism was recalled from the reservation. Churches were filled to capacity, as people cried out to God.
9. The ACLU was briefly silent, as the nation said no to Deism and cried out for the reaffirmation of Divine Providence.
10. A national plea emerged: "God Bless America." This slogan could be found everywhere.
11. The slogan assumed a God of providence. The slogan is a plea for God to help, to intervene, to bring redemption out of tragedy.
12. Christians can rejoice at such a slogan, until it is realized that the God who is appealed to means different things to different people.
13. The God of Judeo-Christianity is not the God of the Muslim, the Buddhist, or Hinduism.
14. Furthermore, the slogan conveys a sense of religious schizophrenia, because the idea is rejected that God could have been involved in any way with the destruction of the Twin Towers. Somehow, the events of 9/11 are divorced from the idea of Divine providence.

15. The providence of God is wanted, and allowed, as long as it is a blessing. The idea of tragedy, and heartache, being part of God's providence is rejected.
16. The biblical understanding of God's providence is that He is the One who supervises all things that come to pass, according to the council of His own will.
- *Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*
17. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is as much a part of Divine providence as the resurrection.
- *Acts 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*
  - *Acts 13:20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.*
18. In the providence of God comes both blessing, and calamity. Observe the Hebrew parallelism.
- *Isaiah 45:5 I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. 7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.*
19. Unfortunately, the modern mind does not grasp the fullness of Divine providence. Modern man insists if there is a place for God in history, if there is a place for God in the life of a nation, and if there is a place for God in the affairs of individuals, God's place must be one of blessing.
20. There is no room for God in calamity, according to American Humanism. But if God is God, then He is sovereign over all things.

*Special Note.*

**Baptist Confession**  
**CHAPTER 3—OF GOD'S DECREE**

Paragraph 1. God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass.

21. The idea that God ordains all things that comes to pass is a concept that is embraced by Judaism, Christians, and Muslims. On this point of theology, there is common ground.

22. Did God ordain the calamity of 9/11? Indeed He did. Why God ordained such an event is known only to Him.
23. From a human perspective, there are many spiritual, and practical lessons that can be discerned from the calamity.
- People who have turned from worshipping God can be compelled to appeal to Him.
  - The striking of the World Trade Center reminds America that covetousness is a sin. The greed of America, reflected in her debt, is an abomination to God, and a shame of the nation.
  - The action of unrighteous individuals affects the innocent. The evil the Muslim hijackers did hurt many people who had done them no harm.
  - A self-centered nation can learn to be united in a common cause. Much love and self-sacrifice was manifested on 9/11. Many people ran towards danger to help others.
24. Care must be taken not to jump to unknown conclusions, such as God was punishing America. That has not been clearly revealed. Care must be taken not to assume the worst. Jesus warned against this view.
- *Luke 13:1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*
25. Some Christians like to make a distinction between the perfect will of God, and His permissive will.
26. While that may be a comforting distinction, the reality is that God has decreed all things that come to pass, or He has not.
27. If God is sovereign, and He permits all things that come to pass, then the distinction becomes meaningless. God's perfect will prevails in all things.
28. If God chooses to permit something, and He has the power to stop it, then He purposes that event to happen.
29. The English word, permit, is the Greek word epitrepo (ep-ee-trep'-o), to turn over (transfer), i.e. allow. It is used twice in the Authorized Version.

- *1 Corinthians 16:7 For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.*
- *Hebrews 6:3 And this will we do, if God permit.*

**30.** What God permits, what God allows, He purposes. All the purposes of God are assured.

- *Luke 9:51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,*

***Special Note.***

“The greatest thing for us to remember is that we go up to Jerusalem to fulfill God’s purpose, not our own. In the natural life our ambitions are our own, but in the Christian life we have no goals of our own. We talk so much today about our decisions for Christ, our determination to be Christians, and our decisions for this and that, but in the New Testament the only aspect that is brought out is the compelling purpose of God. “You did not choose Me, but I chose you...” John 15:16” (Oswald J. Smith).

**31.** As difficult as it is to accept, God brings good things to pass, and He brings calamity, for His own purposes.

**32.** Peter rebuked people for putting Christ to death, while at the same time recognizing the ordained purpose of God.

- *Acts 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: 24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*

**33.** What devout Christians must do is to submit to the Sovereign, and accept personal responsibility.

**34.** Throughout Scripture, the ordained purposes of God converge with the willful and purposed acts of individuals, producing calamity, illustrated when Joseph was betrayed by his brethren.

- *Genesis 50:20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*

**35.** In wicked choices God is at work to bring His sovereign will to pass. God is not just in control of nature, but every detail of life.

- *Romans 8:28 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.*