

## XVI. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN PLAIN VIEW: 1 Samuel 9:1-16

**INTRODUCTION.** **Ephesians 1:11** says, "God works all things according to the counsel of His will." **1 Samuel 9** shows what that truth looks like working out in time and space.

***1 Samuel chapter 9 is about divine providence, when God causes missing donkeys to bring the peoples' future king, Saul, to the Lord's Prophet, Samuel.***

### CONTEXT.

Now, I want you to remember or realize where we are in 1 Samuel.

**I) At the end of chapter 8, the people of God demand a King like the other nations, and the Lord tells Samuel to give them what they want. This is about 1,045 B.C.**

- **1 Samuel 8:19-22** "19 But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, 'No! But there shall be a king over us, 20 that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.' 21 And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. 22 And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Obey their voice and make them a king.' Samuel then said to the men of Israel, 'Go every man to his city.'"

**II) At the beginning of chapter 9, Saul is introduced.**

- **1 Samuel 9:1-2** "1 There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. 2 And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people."

**III) After quite a few seemingly meaningless details about Saul trying to find his father's lost donkeys, God reveals what is really going on in 1 Samuel 9.**

- **1 Samuel 9:15-16** "15 Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel: 16 "Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin. . ."

**DOCTRINE.** God works providentially in all things, from the smallest to the greatest, for His enemies' destruction, His peoples' good, and His own glory.

## Q15. WHAT ARE GOD'S WORKS OF PROVIDENCE?

A. God's works of providence are His most holy, wise, and powerful *preserving* and *governing* all His creatures, and all their actions (Neh. 9:6; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3; Ps. 103:19; Matt. 10:29-30).

### OUTLINE.

- I. The Lord God works providentially in small things (**1 Sam. 9:3-14**).
- II. The Lord God works providentially in great things (**1 Sam. 9:15**).
- III. The Lord God works providentially in both small and great things for His enemies' destruction, His peoples' good, and His own glory (**1 Sam. 9:16**).

## I. THE LORD GOD WORKS PROVIDENTIALLY IN SMALL THINGS (1 Sam. 9:).

There are at least six things to notice in 1 Samuel 9:3-14 as it pertains to God working providentially in small things:

### I) The LORD providentially governed donkeys to go missing so that Saul would go find them (1 Sam. 9:3a).

**1 Samuel 9:3a** "Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost."

- **BOYS AND GIRLS**, Why did Saul's donkeys go missing? **A1**. Because God wanted them to. **A2**. Because when Saul goes to try and find the missing donkeys, Saul meets Samuel is anointed as the earthly King of God's people.

### II) The LORD providentially governed Kish to tell Saul to take a young man with him, so that he would have the idea to see Samuel (1 Sam. 9:3b).

**1 Samuel 9:3b** "So Kish said to Saul his son, 'Take one of the young men with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys.'"

### III) The LORD providentially governed the donkeys beyond the ordinary places Saul would have looked for them, so that he would keep looking until he came to Samuel (1 Sam. 9:4).

**1 Samuel 9:4** "And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them."

### IV) The LORD providentially governed the young man by bringing to

**his remembrance that there is a man of God near them** (1 Sam. 9:5-6).

**1 Samuel 9:5-6** "5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, 'Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us.' 6 But he said to him, 'Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man who is held in honor; all that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go.'"

**V) The LORD providentially governed the young man to bring a quarter of a shekel of silver, so that they would have it to give to Samuel** (1 Sam. 9:7-10).

7 Then Saul said to his servant, "But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?" 8 The servant answered Saul again, "Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way." 9 (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer," for today's "prophet" was formerly called a seer.) 10 And Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.

**VI) The LORD providentially governed the young women, the sacrifice, and the Prophet so that Saul would meet Samuel** (1 Sam. 9:11-14).

**1 Samuel 9:11-14** "11 As they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?" 12 They answered, "He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Hurry. He has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place. 13 As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately." 14 So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place."

- **BOYS AND GIRLS, God works providentially in all things, even very small things. (Recap 1 Samuel 9).**

**II. THE LORD GOD WORKS PROVIDENTIALLY IN GREAT THINGS** (1 Sam. 9:15-16a).

**1 Samuel 9:15-16a** "15 Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel: 16a "Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel."

*Not only does the Lord God work providentially over missing donkeys, shekels of silver, and the remembrance of young men, He also sets up kings and removes kings.*

*The Lord God causes floods to rise and fall, storms to grow and cease, and because of His mighty wise and holy providence, all who get a glimpse of Him cry out, "Glory!"*

- **BOYS AND GIRLS**, God works providentially in all things, even very great things.

Did you hear the thunder or see the lightning last night? Who caused those storms to rage? God did.

Who caused Saul to be King, Trump to be President, and Biden to be President? God did.

### **I) By His providence, God *PRESERVES* all His creatures, and all their actions, from the smallest to the greatest.**

- **Matthew 10:29** "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground *apart from your Father.*"
  - **Nehemiah 9:6** "You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; *and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.*"
  - **Colossians 1:17** "in [Christ] all things *hold together.*"
    - **Hebrews 1:3** "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and *he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*"

### **II) By His providence, God *GOVERNS* all His creatures, and all their actions, from the smallest to the greatest.**

- **Ephesians 1:11** "God works all things according to the counsel of His will."
  - **Psalms 103:19** "The LORD has established his throne in the heavens and his kingdom rules over all."
    - **Proverbs 16:9** "The heart of a man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps."
      - **Proverbs 16:33** "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD."
        - **Proverbs 21:1** "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever he will."
          - **Isaiah 46:9-11**  
"9 I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me,

**10** declaring the end from the beginning  
and from ancient times things not yet done,  
saying, 'My counsel shall stand,  
*and I will accomplish all my purpose,'*  
**11** . . . I have spoken, and *I will bring it to pass;*  
I have purposed, and *I will do it."*

**THE GREAT PURITAN THEOLOGIAN AND PASTOR STEPHEN CHARNOCK, IN HIS BOOK "DIVINE PROVIDENCE," DOES A MASTERFUL JOB TEACHING THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD FROM THE SCRIPTURES. IN HIS BOOK, HE SAYS,**

- *"God preserves and governs the world:*
  1. Nothing takes place in the world without God's knowledge.
  2. Nothing takes place in the world without God's will.
  3. Nothing exists without God's care and power."
- **THOMAS BOSTON:** "God sits in his secret place, surrounded with clouds and darkness., holding the rudder of the world in his hand, and steering its course through all the floatings and tossings of causality and contingency to his own appointed ends."

**OBJECTION.** Does this mean God causes sin or is the author of sin?

- **ANSWER.** No.
  - **James 1:13** "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one."
  - **1 John 1:5** "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."
- **THOMAS BOSTON:** "It is true, God decreed not the effecting of sin, for then he should have been the author of it, but he decreed the permission of sin."
  - **In Chapter 3 of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith, it says this:**
    1. From all eternity God decreed everything that occurs, without reference to anything outside himself. He did this by the perfectly wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably.  
*Yet God did this in such a way that he is neither the author of sin nor has fellowship with any in their sin. This decree does not violate the will of the creature or take away the free working or contingency of second causes."*

**III) God's works of providence are HOLY, therefore they are not the least bit tainted with sin.**

- **Exodus 15:11** "Who is like [the LORD], majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?"
  - **Psalms 145:17** "The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works."

**IV) God's works of providence are WISE, therefore you can trust Him even when you have no idea what He is doing.**

- **Romans 11:33** "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and *how inscrutable (impossible to understand or interpret) his ways!*"

**V) God's works of providence are POWERFUL, therefore you need fear nothing if you are a Christian.**

- **Daniel 4:34-35** "34 His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;  
35 all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, 'What have you done?'"

**III. THE LORD GOD WORKS PROVIDENTIALLY IN BOTH SMALL AND GREAT THINGS FOR HIS ENEMIES' DESTRUCTION, HIS PEOPLES' GOOD, AND HIS OWN GLORY (1 Sam. 9:15-16a).**

**1 Samuel 9:16b** "He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me."

**I) The Lord God works providentially in both small and great things for His enemies' destruction.**

- **1 Samuel 14:20** "Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle. And behold, every Philistine's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion."
- **WARNING.**

**II) The Lord God works providentially in both small and great things for His peoples' good.**

- **Consider Genesis 50:20** "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."
  - **Romans 8:28** "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

- **WHAT A SOURCE OF COMFORT AND CONSOLATION THIS TRUTH IS.**

**III) The Lord God works providentially in both small and great things for His own glory.**

- **Leviticus 10:3** "Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord has said: 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace."
- **Isaiah 44:23** "Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it; shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel."
- **In Ephesians 1:11, when Paul writes,** "[God] works all things according to the counsel of his will" the why is answered. Why does God work all things providentially, from the smallest to the greatest, according to the counsel of His will? **Ephesians 1 tells you!** "To the praise of His glory," "To the praise of His glory," "To the praise of His glorious grace."
  - **EXAMINATION.** Is this what you most want? Then the greatest desire of your heart is being fulfilled! Hallelujah!

**NOW, LET ME CLOSE UP THIS SERMON WITH SOME SPECIFIC APPLICATION FOR YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE.**

**I) God Himself is your preserver and governor by His providence, from the smallest things to the greatest things, therefore see how YOU OWE HIM WORSHIP.**

- **Psalms 29:2** "Ascribe to the Lord the glory **due his name**; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness."

**II) God Himself is your preserver and governor by His providence, from the smallest things to the greatest things, therefore see how EVIL SIN IS.**

- **Sin says,** "Let us burst [the LORD's] bonds apart and cast away [His] cords from us." (**Psalm 2:3**)
  - **Romans 1:30 says those who are still outside of Christ are** "haters of God."
  - **Proverbs 19:3** "When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the LORD."



- **Proverbs 21:4** "The plowing of the wicked is sin."
- **BOYS AND GIRLS AND ALL YOU WHO CAN HEAR ME:** sin is evil and the wages of it is death. Physical death once, spiritual death every waking moment for all eternity under the judgement and wrath of God.

Everyone of us need to be saved from its penalty and power. Jesus Christ, the God-man, lived, died, and arose from the dead so that all who believe on Him would be saved. Trust in Him, turn from sin, be baptized, and walk with His Church all the days of your life for His glory!

**III) God Himself sent His only Son into the world to die in place of sinners, therefore see how YOU CAN TRUST HIM, and all His acts of providence.**

- **Acts 4:27-28** "27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place."

**IV) God Himself works providentially over both small and great things, therefore see how evil it is to murmur or whine or complain when annoyances or sufferings come upon you.**

- **Look at these annoyances Saul went through with the lost Donkeys in 1 Samuel 9! But look what the Lord was doing!**
  - **Philippians 2:14** "Do all things without grumbling or disputing."
- **Think about the sufferings Job went through! But look what the Lord was doing!**
  - **Job 13:15** "Though he slay me, I will hope in him."
  - **Job 19:25-27**

"For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
and at the last he will stand upon the earth.  
And after my skin has been thus destroyed,  
yet in my flesh I shall see God,  
whom I shall see for myself,  
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.  
My heart faints within me!"
- **Nathaniel Vincent:** "It is nothing to have tribulation for several days — and then to triumph in the presence of God, and of the Lamb forever!"

**V) God Himself works providentially over both small and great things, therefore see that your job is to simply do your everyday ordinary duties the Lord has assigned to you.**

***Saul was simply doing his ordinary everyday duties, but because***



***the Lord was providentially working in the small and the great, Saul is being exalted to be King. There is a lesson here!***

- **Q.** What are the ordinary everyday duties the Lord has assigned to you? Are you a husband? Father? Wife? Mother? Child? In School or in a training or preparation period of your life? Are you single in an ordinary vocation?

***Wherever you are or whatever your duties are, commit to glorifying the Lord through them everyday, and see how He will providentially work in both the small and the great for His enemies' destruction, His peoples' good, and His own glory!***

*At the same time, let God's providence spur you on to attempt great things for His glory, while not neglecting your ordinary everyday duties!*

- **Ecclesiastes 12:13** "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."
  - **George Whitefield:** "Oh let us continually keep faith in exercise, until it be entirely swallowed up in the boundless ocean of beatific vision!"

**DOCTRINE.** God works providentially in all things, from the smallest to the greatest, for His enemies' destruction, His peoples' good, and His own glory. SOLI DEO GLORIA.

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*God preserves and governs the world:*

1. Nothing takes place in the world without God's knowledge.
2. Nothing takes place in the world without God's will.
3. Nothing exists without God's care and power.

*God works in His Providence over all the actions of all creatures:*

1. God works Providentially over natural actions.
2. God works Providentially over civil actions.
3. God works Providentially over preternatural (extraordinary) actions.
4. God works Providentially over supernatural actions.

5. God works Providentially over fortuitous actions.
6. God works Providentially over all voluntary actions.

*The evil of denying providence:*

1. Denying providence gives liberty to sin.
2. Denying providence destroys religion.
3. Denying providence causes loss of dependence, trust, and hope.
4. Denying providence is a disparagement of God.
5. Denying providence is against reason.

*The comfort of knowing providence:*

1. Humanity is a special object of providence.
2. God's saints are most special to him.
3. Believers must bear innocent sufferings.
4. Knowing we are secure gives comfort to believers.

*The perilous ways in which people deny providence:*

1. Walking contrary to the checks of providence.
2. Omitting to pray.
3. Looking to other people rather than God.
4. Giving glory to others instead of God.
5. Turning to sin to have our way.
6. Choosing not to trust God.
7. Showing daring contempt of God's providence.
8. Practicing envy.
9. Being impatient in our trials.
  - (i). Impatience is a wrong to the sovereignty of providence.
  - (ii). Impatience maligns the goodness and righteousness of providence.
  - (iii). Impatience is a wrong against the wisdom of providence.
10. Blaming providence for our sins and failures.

*Seeking God:*

1. Seek everything you need at the hands of God.
2. Trust providence.
  - (i). Trust providence in the most difficult times.
  - (ii). Trust all the ways of providence.
  - (iii). Trust providence in the way of God's commandments and precepts.
  - (iv). Trust in God alone, without prescribing his methods.
3. Submit to providence.
  - (i). Whatsoever God does, he does wisely.
  - (ii). God reveals himself to us by providence.
4. Do not murmur at providence.
5. Study providence.
  - (i). Study providence universally.

- (ii). Study providence regularly in the Word.
  - (iii). Study providence entirely.
  - (iv). Study providence calmly.
  - (v). Study providence as a serious pursuit.
  - (vi). Study providence in holiness.
6. Ascribe the glory of every providence to God.

*The duty providence requires:*

1. Do not fear the enemies of the church.
- (i). Because God is our security.
  - (ii). Because God watches over all.
  - (iii). Because God restrains them.
  - (iv). Because God will destroy them.

**— *Divine Providence, Stephen Charnock***

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