

happened to him wasn't what we may expect. Joseph's words tell us that it wasn't the actions of Joseph's brothers that brought him to Egypt. It was God who sent him, and it was for God's purposes that he suffered evil (Genesis 45:8, 50:20). When Joseph is reunited with his brothers, he says to them "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God," and "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." God's providence extends even over the evil actions done to us and by us. God's work of redemption can't be thwarted by evil, and he has purposes for the evil and suffering of his people.

Discussion Questions

- Do you struggle to see the good of God's purposes when evil has been done to you?
- Recount some of the evils and injustices done to Christ. How does the evil and suffering done to the Lord Jesus help us to see our own suffering more clearly?

Day 5 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

A common teaching among cults, such as in Mormonism, is that the church had a period of apostasy, and that the true teaching of God's revelation was lost. According to this version of church history, the truth about God can only be restored through a new special revelation. This way of understanding the past is necessary to negate the truth of the scriptures and to replace them with a new teaching. Contrary to what these groups would say, the bible shows us that Christ preserves his church throughout history, and rules as the head over his church to this very day. There have certainly been times where the light of the church was dimmed, but it's never been extinguished. God's providence has preserved and protected the church throughout the ages. During a time of controversy in the Church of South Africa in the 1800s, a churchman in England wrote *Lryica Fidelium*, which are 12 hymns based on 12 truths drawn from the Apostles Creed. One of these 12 hymns will be familiar to you. "Though with a scornful wonder, men see her sore oppressed, by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed, yet saints their watch are keeping, their cry goes up, 'How long?' and soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song! *The church shall never perish! Her dear Lord to defend, to guide, sustain, and cherish, is with her to the end;* though there be those that hate her, and false sons in her pale, against the foe or traitor she ever shall prevail."

Discussion Questions

- Discuss how the bible uses imagery of husband and wife regarding the church. How does this help us understand the care and provision God has for people?
- Psalm 59:13 says "God ruleth in Jacob." How does the grand theme of covenant faithfulness to Israel help us to view God's commitment to care for his church?

Baptist Catechism Family Worship Guide



West Oaks Baptist Church

(in preparation for Sunday, December 10th, 2023)

Baptist Catechism Question #14

Q: 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.*

Suggested Memory Verse

Psalm 145:17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.

Day 1 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

When I (Adam) was a kid, one of the more memorable school projects I did was participating in an egg drop contest. Each student had to create a package that would protect an egg. We designed the shape and size of the package and selected different materials to surround our egg. Each student would then drop their package with the egg inside to see how our eggs fared against gravity. When we leaned over the side of the building to drop our packages, there was no doubt that the package would fall to the ground. Why? Because we know gravity acts on all objects in our atmosphere. God has laid out rules by which He governs our universe, which is part of how God cares for the world He's created. God's rule includes the preserving and governing of all that He's made. God has created laws of nature by which the universe operates. But God is also free to either suspend those laws, or to act contrary to them. God's rule governs the height of a mighty mountain, and the fate of the smallest plankton beneath the waves of the ocean. God orchestrates all of his created order perfectly, including the trees that started as saplings in a forest that went into the cardboard and packing paper that protected my egg. He ordered the chicken that would lay the egg that I would pick to put inside my egg drop package. He also created the law of gravity that would result in my broken egg! Psalm 103:19 sums up God's providence of all creation this way: "His kingdom ruleth over all."

Discussion Question

- What are some examples of laws of nature that God has worked into his creation?
- What are some examples from the bible where God acts contrary to the laws of nature that he created?
- Does the bible have anything to say about God's care for his creation? Give some examples

Day 2 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Have you ever heard of the term "sovereign"? The term is often applied to a king. In times past, most of the world was ruled by monarchs, powerful kings that were the supreme rulers of their realms. Their decisions were final, and their commands were never contradicted. To be a sovereign meant to have ultimate power. When you think of the most powerful person in the world, do you think of the president? Or perhaps the CEO of a multinational corporation who appears to have limitless amounts of money and influence? Or maybe you think of rulers from times past, the kings of England during the height of Britain's Empire, or Cesar Augustus in the golden age of Pax Romana. The power and prestige of these men are impressive by the world's standards. But they are mere men, and they are limited in the size of their kingdom and duration of their lives. There is a King who does not have such limitations. Daniel 2:21 tells us that God "changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others." While it seems that the world's governments are all-powerful, all the power they have is granted and limited by God's decree. Over all of the kings of this world, there is one true King who reigns. The book of Revelation, which was written to give hope to Christians undergoing persecution at the hands of

the Roman Empire, gives this striking image of Jesus Christ: riding out from Heaven, he wields a sword that has the power to subdue the nations. On his thigh and robe are written his name: "King of kings and Lord of lords."

Discussion Questions

- What are some examples in the bible of God's sovereignty over the kingdoms of this world?
- Do you need to grow in your trust that God is ruling over kingdoms of men? What has you worried about the rulers of our country? Make these concerns a matter of your prayers.

Day 3 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Dutch theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper famously said "There's not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ, who is Lord over all, does not exclaim, 'Mine!'" The bible tells us that every detail about your life, from where you live, to the number of hairs on your head, to the precise number of days that you live, have all been determined by God. Psalm 22:10 says "For you drew me forth from the womb," and we read in Isaiah 46:4 "Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you." What a blessed, comforting thought to know God has your entire life in his hands, and that nothing happens to you by mistake. God's care for us also extends beyond our natural lives. Certainly, the bible is full of comforting promises that God will provide all we need, including shelter, food, sleep and protection- but God's providence goes further still! God's providence extends to the hearts of man. It's not just the external circumstances of our lives that God orchestrates, He also has provided for us a powerful Savior to rescue us from sins *and* works in us the faith to believe in the Savior. God's rule is supreme over the hearts of men.

Discussion Questions

- If you are a Christian, you should desire God to be the ruler of your heart. God does in fact rule the hearts of Christians, but we can be stubborn subjects! What areas of your life still need to "bow the knee" to Christ as King?
- Are there specific sins or faithlessness that needs to be confessed? If so, pray for one another.

Day 4 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

The story of Joseph in the bible is an extraordinary one. Often a moralistic version of his story is presented something like this- no matter what bad things happen to you, stay positive and God will bless you. While there are certainly elements of the story that highlight Joseph's faithfulness and God's blessings, one of the main themes that the bible draws out for us is God's use of evil in his plan of redemption. Joseph was thrown in a well and left for dead by his brothers. God's providence was such that Joseph was sold into slavery by Midianites on their way to Egypt. There he was falsely accused of seduction and imprisoned, before being delivered from prison and given the position of advisor to Pharaoh. Joseph's conclusion to all that had