



“The Work of God: What He Has Done”

2 Kings 19

Lesson 5

In A Nutshell

The works of God may be summarized under five broad categories: creation, providence, revelation, salvation, and judgment. Most of what the Bible tells us that the God of heaven has done, is doing, or shall do may be understood as belonging to one of these categories. The last three, revelation, salvation, and judgment, are works of God this series of studies covers in other lessons (revelation—Lesson 2, “The Bible: the Book God Wrote—Part 1”; salvation—Lesson 11, “God’s Saving Grace”; and judgment—Lesson 14, “Things to Come—Part 2”). This lesson will cover the first two, creation and providence.

In 2 Kings 19:1, King Hezekiah tears his clothes, covers himself with sackcloth, and enters the house of God. He does so because Assyria had besieged the fortress cities of Judah and was threatening to destroy their kingdom with curses against the Lord. Under these conditions, Hezekiah prayed.

In his prayer the king remembers that God made heaven and earth, God’s work of creation (v. 15). In view of that supernatural work of God, he prays for deliverance from this enemy who had defeated every other foe and who grossly outnumbered his forces. Hezekiah needed a miracle from the God who had worked miraculously to make all things.

Israel got their miracle in the overnight death of 185,000 Assyrian troops (v. 35). But they got more than this. The prophet Isaiah explained to them that God is not only the God of the miraculous, He is also the God that is in complete control of every circumstance, including the successes and victories of Assyria (vv. 23-27). Hezekiah thought he needed God to intervene, but in reality the God who made all things in heaven and in earth is also the God who is in complete control of all things in heaven and in earth. He does not intervene so much as complete His plan. This is God’s work of providence. Even when we need a supernatural miracle, it is only because God’s plan has desired it so to be.

To The Testimony!

God’s Supernatural Work of Creation

- Gen. 1:1
1. *Atheism* is the belief that God does not exist. *Polytheism* is the belief that many gods exist. *Pantheism* is the belief that everything is God. How does the very first verse of the Bible contradict each of these false views of God?

Interesting Insight!

Dr. Robert Jastrow was a Columbia University PhD in theoretical physics. He began working for NASA when that organization was founded, and he served as the first chairman of its Lunar Exploration committee. He was the Chief of the Theoretical Division at NASA and then the founding director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies. He taught Geophysics and Earth Sciences at Columbia University and Dartmouth University. In 1978 Dr. Jastrow wrote a book called *God and the Astronomers*, in which he said the following:

“At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries” (p. 116; p. 107 in 1992 edition).

- Gen. 1:2—2:3 2. How long did it take God to create the universe (Exod. 20:11)?
What materials did God use to create the universe (Heb. 11:3)?
What was the universe like just after God created it (Gen. 1:31)?
How do these truths compare with the doctrine of theistic evolution, that God used evolution to create the world?
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- Rom. 5:12 3. From where did death come according to the Bible? Why is this
8:18-23 doctrine incompatible with the idea that man evolved from lower
lifeforms?
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Ps. 4. A copyright is a law which protects an author's ownership of
50:10-12 what he has written. A patent is a legal device which protects an
Exod. inventor's right of ownership over something he has invented.
19:5 What right does creation give God in regard to the universe?
Job 41:11
Deut.
10:12-14
Rev. 4:11

God's Natural Work of Providence

Isa. 5. The word providence includes two Latin roots that together
46:5-11 mean to see before. God, in His work of providence, sees the end
Rom. from the beginning, meaning that the course of history is His exe-
11:36 cution of His plan for the universe designed to bring Him pleasure
Eph. (Isa. 46:10). The fulfillment of the many prophecies of Scripture
1:11 demonstrate God's ability to not only see the future, but also to
execute His purpose through it (v. 11). What can the God of provi-
dence do that an idol cannot according to Isa. 46:7?

Rom. 6. We normally express thanks to someone from whom we have
8:28 received something beneficial. Paul tells us, "in everything give
1 Thess. thanks" to the God of providence. What does this tell us about the
5:18 work of God's providence in our lives?

Gen. 7. Joseph's life was an exhibition of God's work of providence. A
45:4-8 course was set early by two dreams that Joseph had of his family
50:19-21 bowing down to him (Gen. 37:1-11). After suffering many cruel
betrayals and frustrations beyond his control, Joseph experienced
the future and purpose that God had providentially planned for
him. What role did the plans of Joseph's brothers play in that out-
come (Gen. 45:4, 8; 50:20)? What must we conclude about God's
work of providence from the role that the brothers played?

Job
1:12
2:3-7

8. God's work of providence, like all of His mighty works, is not something we can fully comprehend. We know as little about how to do providence as we do about how to create the universe. God is holy and forbids sin, and yet the sins of man are prophesied as a part of the plan that God sees before and uses to accomplish His good purpose (Matt. 27:9-10; Acts 2:23). The book of Job touches on this mystery. Was the calamity and evil Job experienced the product of God's or Satan's work in Job's life? What do we learn about providence from this?

Interesting Insight!

“All things without exception, indeed, are disposed by Him, and His will is the ultimate account of all that occurs. Heaven and earth and all that is in them are the instruments through which He works His ends. Nature, nations, and the fortunes of the individual alike present in all their changes the transcript of His purpose. . . . Nor is there really any lack of recognition of ‘second causes,’ as we call them. They are certainly not conceived as independent of God: they are rather the mere expressions of His stated will. But they are from the beginning full recognized, both in nature—with respect to which Jehovah has made covenant . . . , establishing its laws . . .—and equally in the higher sphere of free spirits, who are ever conceived as the true authors of all their acts There is no question here of the substitution of Jehovah's operation for that of the proximate causes of events. There is only the liveliest perception of the governing hand of God behind the proximate causes, acting through them for the working out of His will in every detail” [Benjamin Warfield, “Predestination,” in *Biblical and Theological Studies* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1952), 272-273].