

## I Believe in the Preserver of Heaven and Earth

### *Introduction – Legos*

- My kids like Legos. Separate colors; follow instructions; build vehicles, buildings way instructions direct. This year's school art fair, my son: Lego fire station, with firefighters, vehicles. Kids like to create with Legos. Starting point, Father's work. Last week, Creator: not blocks but from nothing; not little art display but huge universe; not from instructions but his mind; not lifeless objects like Lego set but world filled with life. Here's another difference (today): fire station in basement, hasn't touched for weeks. When God created, didn't just leave it, not take care of for weeks, years. No: God the Father is constantly at work preserving, protecting, providing for, taking care of his creation.

### *God's Providence of the World*

- "Preserver." Creator preserves creation; doctrine of God's providence (provide): Creator provides for, takes care of his creation. Shouldn't be taken for granted: the life and continued existence of everything created depends entirely on Creator. Take self as example; if God stopped providing, taking care of, you'd be nothing. You can't control, preserve our own life; none can. We depend.
- So, Creator created and preserves. Massive job. Three angles: (1) Entire creation in whole universe – planets; oxygen in atmosphere; tiniest fish bottom of ocean; birds of Amazon rainforest; rivers flowing, wind blowing, sun shining – entire creation. (2) In particular, humans. Special care/love; we're special creation. Next Sunday: loving Father of human race, plan to save humans. Also certainly provides for all humans: **"He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Mt 5:45)**. God cares for all people. (3) In the most special sense: his people, calls his children, Christian people, trust in Jesus as Savior, call on him as heavenly Father through Christ. Special care for believers. Passage: **Rom 8:28a**. So for those who love God, God promises special care.

### *God Doesn't Always Appear to be Preserving*

- Problem: doesn't always seem that way; like God taking special care of people. If Creator preserving, then why so many bad to God's people? Hard question. Tension in providence: God says taking care, but sometimes doesn't look like. Three angles: (1) If cares for world, why natural disasters devastate creation? (2) If cares for humans, why 9/11, world wars, children starve to death, people suffer throughout world? (3) If especially Christians, why we suffer with terminal diseases; children die; parents Alzheimer's; car accidents? God really preserving? Doesn't always look like it.

### *Lots We Don't See*

- That's because a lot you can't see. Lot of God's things, in his mind/providence, that you can't see. (1) One thing: how devastating fall into sin was on world. In Eden, everything perfect for all creation; could see God's providence everywhere. Now because of sin, world under curse: get sick, die; accidents happen, crime happens, atrocities take place. Direct result of sin. Can see effects. I don't think we can fully grasp, see how all-encompassing curse of sin on world is.
- (2) Another: reason why God allows evil. Promises, **Rom 8:28a**. Don't always see that working plan, or how good. Occasionally do: Joseph in jail; Jesus arrested. But usually we cannot see exactly why he allows evil into lives. God doesn't roll out blueprints of lives and show exactly why this happened, or how this bad will turn out for good. For some questions, just have to wait until heaven for answer, because God doesn't show us full plan. Can't see it.
- (3) Another: unfathomable meticulousness of God's preserving hand. Just can't see everything God does to take care of world, or of you. Ever hear phrase "detail oriented," "attention to detail"? Our God is detail oriented; pays attention to all little details. Intricately, carefully, thoroughly governs all

things, in all the world, all the time. **“Every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects of the fields are mine” (Ps 50:10-11). “He determines the number of stars and calls them each by name...He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills” (Ps 147:4,8). “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Mt 10:29-30).**

That’s attention to detail! Today’s Gospel: sparrows don’t farm, but Father feeds; flowers don’t work, but Father clothes. God takes care of all things, in all the world, all the time, even if we can’t see!

- (4) Something else: can’t see angels he sends to protect us. Talk providence, talk angels. **“No harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone” (Ps 91:10-12).** Can’t see angels, yet God promises that his angels are guarding, protecting us at all times. Can’t see them; but God promises it’s true.
- (5) Brings us to final point: doctrine of God’s providence all based on promise. Can’t see promise; trust promise. Promises (wants us to trust): **Rom 8:28a**. Creator promises to preserve us. When that’s easy to see, we rejoice, thank God that life is good, richly blessing, experiencing little/no hardship. But when it’s not so easy to see that God is preserving us – when family sick, friends die, accidents happen – then at those times, we need to hold onto promises of God with all our might, not let go, say with Christian confidence: **Rom 8:28a** (even bad things). We believe that promise because God has already proved he’s promise-keeper in Christ. When we needed Savior from sin, God promised a Savior from sin and sent his Son Jesus to die on cross, rise from dead for us. So we take God at word when he says he’s working good for us **“in all things.”**

#### *Christians See Things Differently*

- And, as Christians, we see things differently. We see God’s providence with eyes of faith and look for it in the little things. We see it in how God “richly and daily provid[es] clothing and shoes...” We see it in how God “defend[s] me against all danger, guard[s] and protect[s] me from all evil.” And our response to God’s providence simply this: “For all this I ought to thank...certainly true.” Praise be to God the Father, the maker and preserver of heaven and earth.

#### **Romans 8:28**

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.