

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Introduction

Two Dangerous Extremes

- We must exercise caution in attributing to God's providence each and every specific event, and blaming God recklessly with every adversity.
- Others see no providence working in his life other than the natural processes of nature.

God's Providence Does Exist

Difficult to say that this or that event or incident in life was a specific act of providence.

- *Eccl. 9:1 "For all this I laid to my heart, even to explore all this: that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God."*

God's Providence Does Exist

- *"Man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end."
(Eccl. 3:11)*
- Therefore as we *"walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7), we "Trust in Jehovah with al thy heart, And lean not upon thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he will direct thy paths."* (Prov. 3:5-6)

In this series of studies we want to consider:

- What is Providence?
- Distinct from Miracles.
- General Providence: God working in nature.
- Specific Providence: God working in individual lives. (Joseph, Esther, Paul, etc.)
- Providence and Free will.
- Providence and Prayer.

What Is Providence?

- Creation refers to that singular activity by which in the beginning God brought the universe into existence...
 - Providence is a general concept that refers to the broad scope of God's continuing activity in relation to the on-going world.
- Providence is the working of God through His provision in the natural and spiritual realms, yet it is a control that violates neither the sovereignty of the human will nor the divine natural and spiritual laws.

What Is Providence?

Providence has to do with providing. To provide, foresee, or see ahead.

- Abraham said unto Isaac, "*God will provide himself the lamb*" *Gen. 22:8* (In the Septuagint "He will see to it.")
- The English word "providence" occurs only once in the KJV.. Acts 24:2. Here it refers to the forethought and subsequent arrangements of a man (Felix).

What Is Providence?

- Definition: God's providence is his continuous activity of preserving and governing the whole of creation by his wisdom and goodness and power, for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose and for the glory of His name.

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General Providence

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Basis Of Providence

- *"The Lord has established His throne in the heavens; and His sovereignty rules over all" (Ps. 103:19)*
- Rules extends over all things
- Acts without voiding man's ability to choose own actions.

Different Ways...

- General Providence
 - Matthew 5:45
- Special Providence
 - God's intervention
- Miracles
 - Acts that are contrary to natural laws.

Three ways in which God relates to his creation.

1. General providence... God working to preserve the universe and direct its natural processes according to the predictable patterns we call the "laws of nature."

- In this realm, God's providence relates to all people alike, *"for he causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous"* (Mt. 5:45)

Three ways in which God relates to his creation.

- 2. Special providence... This refers to God's intervention into the regular course of things in order to produce a variation that would not have occurred otherwise, but which does not violate the possibilities of natural law.
 - Cf. His rule over history, since this is his ordinary way of working out his special purposes for mankind.

Three ways in which God relates to his creation.

- 3. Miracles... These are acts of God that are contrary to natural law.



Why we believe that miracles have ceased

- I. The Purpose Is Accomplished
- II. Holy Spirit Baptism Has Ceased
- III. Means Of Imparting Gifts Has Ceased
- IV. Would Cease With The Complete Revelation
- V. No Evidence of Miracles Today

God's Right to Claim Universal Rule and Direction

- Basis of His creative power
 - Genesis 1:1 Creator.
 - Psalm 33:6-9
 - Psalm 104:1-8
 - Psalm 148:5,6
 - Romans 1:20
 - Colossians 1:16,17

God's Right to Claim Universal Rule and Direction

- Jno. 1:1-3,14
- Heb. 1:2
- Rev. 4:11
- On the basis of this creative power and its usage, Jehovah claims His control, rule and direction of the universe.

God Preserves In Existence The Things He Created

Acts 17:28; Col. 1:17

- Creation itself
 - Job 38:4-7
- In Him
 - Only God can answer these questions
 - Hebrews 1:3
 - 2 Peter 3:10-12

God's Involvement in the Processes of Nature

- Job's bewilderment...
- Job 9:22-24
- Job 38:4-38
 - Could any man answer these questions?
 - Questions men have pondered for centuries!

Rules Inanimate World

Job 38:4-38

- Control and government of the sea (vs. 8-14). Cf. Ps. 104:1,5-9; Jer. 5:22 God not only created the sea and set bounds about it, but he continues to control its activities. Cf. Jer. 31:35
- The bringing forth of the dawn. (Vs. 12-15)
- The dwelling of light (vs. 19-21).

Rules Inanimate World

Job 38:4-38

- Snow and Hail (vs. 22-24).
 - God says that the treasuries of the snow and hail are His arsenal which He has "*reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war.*"
- Rain, Lightning and Thunder (vs. 25-30)

Rules Inanimate World

Job 38:4-38

- The Heavenly Bodies (vs. 31-33).
- The Clouds and Rain (vs. 34-38) Cf. Ps. 135:6-7; Job 36:27-28; 37:11-12

God's Control in Animate Kingdom

Job 38:39-41:34

- The Lioness and her Whelps (38:39-40).
- The Raven. (vs. 41) God has made provision for man and the raven. "I know every bird of the mountains." (Ps. 50:11)
 - Not even one sparrow is forgotten before God. (Lk. 12:6; Mt. 10:29)
- The Wildgoats (39:1-4)
- The Wild Ass and the Swift Ass (39: 5-8)

God's Control in Animate Kingdom

Job 38:39-41:34

- The Wild Ox (39:9-12) Because of its nature it was never tamed or used to serve man. Now extinct, it was large, strong and wild.
- The Ostrich (39:13-18).
- The Horse. (39:19-25)
- The Hawk and the Eagle. (39:26-30)

- God's care for these and all other creatures, through purpose and law in the inanimate world and instill instinct in the animate creation, displays His forethought and foresight -- PROVIDENCE!!
- He teaches Job that back of his creation there is propose; and though Job may not fully understand, he had to admit, "*I know that thou canst do all things, And that no purpose of thine can be restrained.*" (Job 42:2)
- We too must concur with this conclusion.