



The Providence of God
Special Providence

General Providence

- God acts in preserving the universe according to predictable patterns we call natural law.
- In this action, God works the same everywhere at all times, to all people, good and evil are equally subjected.
- **Matthew 5:45**

Special Providence

- Natural law and human free will is not the only forces at work in our lives.
- There is another force at work, one which CONTROLS and DIRECTS—namely God.

Special Providence

- God acts through natural law and influences human decisions so as to cause results that would not have occurred without the intervention, but which still exist within the possibilities of natural law and which do not violate the integrity of free will.

Special Providence

- **Ecclesiastes 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.”*
- **Ecclesiastes 3:11** *“Man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end.”*

Special Providence

- **Deuteronomy 29:29** *“The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”*
- Therefore we *“walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7), we “Trust in Jehovah with all 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)*

Overview...

- God's purpose is seen in the control of men and nations—as He worked His purpose for the nation of Israel.
- Special providence in the use of heathen nations.
- God rules in the nations.
- God can does raise up certain men.
- Time when judgment must come to the moral world.

God's Purpose in Creation

- To glorify God
 - Romans 11:36; Col. 1:16
- Glorify Him as king.
- Right to rule as Creator
 - Psalm 24:1,2
 - 2 Kings 19:15
 - 2 Chronicles 29:11,12
 - Daniel 2:21; 5:21

God's Purpose in Creation

- Right to rule as Creator
- Ps. 22:28; 47:2; 97:1,5,9; 103:19; 145:11-13.
- Often men carried out the plan of God unawares. Cf. Acts. 2:23; 4:28.

God's Purpose in Creation

- Through His special providence He controls kings and kingdoms.
 - *Dan 2:21* “And he changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that have understanding;”
 - *Dan 5:21* “and he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts', and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; until he knew that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that he setteth up over it whomsoever he will.”

God's Purpose in Creation

- Even the smallest of events are not past His control.
 - *Proverbs 16:33* "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision {is} from the Lord. " Cf. Acts 1:24-26

Developing Israel

- Because of sin God chose to redeem man from sin through His Son Jesus Christ.
 - Genesis 3:15
- Atoning death on the cross.
- Not just a casual preparation.
- God chose ONE nation from all people
 - Deuteronomy 7:7,8
- Worked with them through the centuries.

God Chose Abraham

- Genesis 12:1-7
- Physical and Spiritual promise.
- NATION
 - Genesis 15:5
- LAND
 - Genesis 15:18-21
- SEED
 - All nations blessed by that Seed.

Ishmael and Isaac

- Two Sons
- Ishmael
 - Born to Hagar (Genesis 16:1-3)
- Isaac
 - Born to Sarah (Genesis 21:1-7; cf. Gen. 22)

Jacob and Esau

- Twin Sons
- Esau
 - Sold birthright (Genesis 25:39-34)
- Jacob
 - God chose younger (Genesis 25:21-28)

Jacob's 12 Sons

- Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun
 - Leah
- Gad, Asher
 - Zilpah
- Joseph, Benjamin
 - Rachel
- Dan, Naphtali
 - Bilhah

Gen. 35:22ff

Story of Joseph

- Not chosen by whim
- Ended up in Egypt
- Reveals his identity
 - Genesis 45:7,8
- Following death of Jacob
 - Genesis 50:18,19

Period of Conquest

- God accomplished purpose hardening Pharaoh's heart.
 - Exodus 9:12
- Destruction of Egyptian army.
 - Exodus 14:13
- Land taken.
 - Joshua 11:23
- Land promised fulfilled.
 - Joshua 21:43-45

Period of Judges

- Lasted over 300 years
- God used the surrounding nations to chastise Israel.
 - Judges 2:10
 - Judges 2:16,20-23
 - Judges 3:12, etc.

Period of United Kingdom

- God's people wanted a king. 1 Sam. 8:4;
cf. Deut. 17:14ff
- God selected first three kings
- SAUL
 - 1 Samuel 8-9; 9:15-16
- DAVID
 - 1 Samuel 13:14
- SOLOMON
 - 1 Kings 3:8-12
 - 1 Kings 11:11,31,35 Kingdom to be taken away
 - 1 Kings 11:14,23 God to raise up adversaries

Period of the Divided Kingdom

- Foolishness of Rehoboam.
– 1 Kings 12

Northern Kingdom— Israel

- Idolatry first introduced in Israel. Not one good king.
- 1 Kings 14:7-8
- 1 Kings 16:2,3

Northern Kingdom— Israel

- 1 Kings 22:19-35
- Israel was destroyed by Assyria in 722 B.C.
2 Kings 17
 - **1 Chronicles 5:26** *"And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river of Gozan, unto this day."*

Southern Kingdom—Judah

- Nation had better kings
- Destroyed by Babylon 125 years later. Jer. 6:22-23; 2 Kgs. 23:27; 24:2-3
 - Cf. Habakkuk 1
- Ended the reign of Davidic kings over a political kingdom.
- **Jeremiah 22:29,30; Ezek. 21:25-27; 37:24-27**
- **2 Samuel 7:12-14**
- **Jeremiah 29:4-7**

Period of Restoration

- Promised by Jeremiah after 70 years of captivity
 - Jeremiah 29:10,14
- God chose Cyrus, King of Persia
 - Isaiah 44:28-45:13
- Fulfilled
 - Ezra 1:1-3
- Nehemiah help rebuild the walls of the city
 - Nehemiah 4:6; 6:15; 9:6-8

Summary of Heathen Nations

- Egypt was used to provide for and preserve the people who would develop into a mighty nation of God's people.
- Great nation
 - Galatians 3:16,17
- God was in control
 - Exodus 3-12

Summary of Heathen Nations

- Assyria. Cf. Isa. 10:5-7, 25-26
- God gave the land to Israel because He promised it.
- Retaining the land was conditional
 - Joshua 23:14-16; Deut. 4:25; 28:15ff
- Northern tribes captured and taken into captivity
 - 2 Kings 17:5

Summary of Heathen Nations

- Babylon.
- Habakkuk 1:5-11
- Jeremiah 3:11-14; The king of Babylon would also be punished by God, just as the king of Assyria. (Jer. 50:17-18)
- Daniel 4:17-25; 5:17-23
- Conquered fully in 586 BC.

Heathen Nations

- Medo-Persian Empire
- Used to execute judgment on Babylon
 - Jeremiah 51:11,25,26
- Destroyed Babylon 539 B.C.
- Isaiah 13:17 Prophecy against Babylon

Heathen Nations

- Greek Empire
- Alexander the Great
- Daniel 8:5, 20ff
- Contribution—Greek language became to universal language in the world.

Heathen Nations

- Roman Empire
- Time period of God's kingdom
 - Daniel 2:44,45
- Contribution—Roads and highways made travel easier.
 - Acts 8:4
- Finally destroyed Judaism forever
 - Matthew 24 Destruction of Jerusalem

What About Nations Today?

- Jesus has all authority
 - Matthew 28:18
- God still controls civil government
 - Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-2
- Destruction of was God's judgment against wickedness
- Salt and Light must remain
 - Matthew 5:13-16

Conclusion

- How does one account for the rise and fall of these nations? (Cf. Dan. 5:18; 4:31-32; 34-37)
- God used these nations to discipline his people. (Jer. 30:11)
- **God cannot be defeated!** *“I know that thou canst do all things, And that no purpose of thine can be restrained.”* (Job 42:2)