

## The Providence of God

### Introduction:

- A. Perhaps no subject is more difficult or misunderstood than the providence of God.
- B. There are two extremes on this subject.
  - 1. those who would leave God out of His creation: deists, theistic evolutionists
  - 2. those who see miracles in every event of life: Pentecostals, charismatics, Calvinists, guardian angels
- C. How does God manifest His providence?

### I. What is the providence of God?

- A. “providence” (“*pronoia*”) - Acts 24:2
  - 1. “*forethought, provident care .... to make provision for a thing*” (Thayer. 540).
    - a. noun - Romans 13:14
    - b. verb - Romans 12:17; 2 Corinthians 8:21; 1 Timothy 5:8
  - 2. The English word “providence” is from the Latin “*providentia*” and refers to foresight (McClintock & Strong. 707).
  - 3. etymology: “pro” (before), “vidence” (“*video*” - “to see”); i.e., “to see before” (Hailey, **Prayer and Providence**)
- B. The providence of God is the forethought, rule, and care that God exercises in all things. - Acts 17:22-31
- C. The providence of God includes but is not limited to miracles.
  - 1. A miracle is the direct, supernatural intervention of God into the natural realm. - Acts 2:22; Hebrews 2:3-4; e.g., John 2:1-11
  - 2. These stand in contrast with false signs. - 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9; Acts 8:5-13; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Jeremiah 10:1-2
  - 3. God’s providence is also manifested through His law.
    - a. natural - Acts 14:17 (foresees and provides for all needs of physical life)
    - b. spiritual - Ephesians 1:3 (foresees and provides for all needs of spiritual life)

### II. God’s Providence in Nature

- A. He created the universe. - Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11
- B. He maintains the universe (by His natural law). - Hebrews 1:1-3
- C. He provides for man and beast (through His natural law). - Psalm 104:10-30; Matthew 6:26,28-30

### III. God’s Providence in the Affairs of Men

- A. God rules all men and nations. - Daniel 4, esp. vv. 1-3,17,34-37; Habakkuk 2:20; Psalm 11:4
- B. This rule is now exercised through His Son. - Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-23; Revelation 19:15; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

- C. He uses men and nations to accomplish His will without their knowledge and without violating their free will.
    - 1. men - Exodus 9:13-16
      - a. God hardened Pharaoh's heart (by sending commands Pharaoh was too proud to obey). - Exodus 9:12; cf. 3:18-19
      - b. Pharaoh hardened his own heart. - Exodus 8:15
    - 2. nations - Habakkuk 1:5-7
  - D. His rule is righteous. - Psalm 97:1-2
  - E. His rule is for the purpose of saving His people.
    - 1. The just shall live by faith. - Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:16-17
    - 2. Evil is self-destructive. - Habakkuk 2:4,8
    - 3. God's ultimate end is the salvation of His faithful remnant. - Habakkuk 3:13; Ephesians 1:10-12
  - F. We should always trust Him to do right. - Habakkuk 3:17-19; Genesis 18:23-33
- IV. God's Providence in the Church
- A. He planned the church from all eternity. - Ephesians 3:8-12
    - 1. salvation to be in Christ - Ephesians 1:3-4
    - 2. those so saved to be holy - Ephesians 1:4
    - 3. this to the glory of God - Ephesians 1:5-6
  - B. All history is subservient to God's purpose of redeeming His people. - Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:7-12; Galatians 4:4
  - C. God provides His church everything we need for our salvation. - Romans 8:31-39
    - 1. He sent His Son to die for us. - John 3:16-17
    - 2. He gave ample evidence to lead us to believe in Him. - John 20:30-31
    - 3. The Holy Spirit revealed and confirmed the Word for our guidance. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 2:1-4
    - 4. He blesses us with all spiritual blessings. - Ephesians 1:3
    - 5. He answers our prayers. - 1 Peter 3:12; 1 John 5:14-15; Romans 8:26-27
    - 6. He will not allow Satan to tempt us beyond our ability to bear. - 1 Corinthians 10:13
    - 7. He disciplines us. - Hebrews 12:3-11
    - 8. His angels minister in our behalf. - Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:13-14
    - 9. He provides our material necessities. - Matthew 6:31-33
  - D. To Him be glory forever! - Romans 11:33-36
- Conclusion:
- A. Truly, we must confess, "God's hand is in it all."
  - B. "O, to have the hand of God to lead you! What hand can guide so safely? What eye can choose and direct your path so well?" (McGarvey)
  - C. Will you not submit to the will of Him whose will governs the universe and shall determine your eternal destiny?