

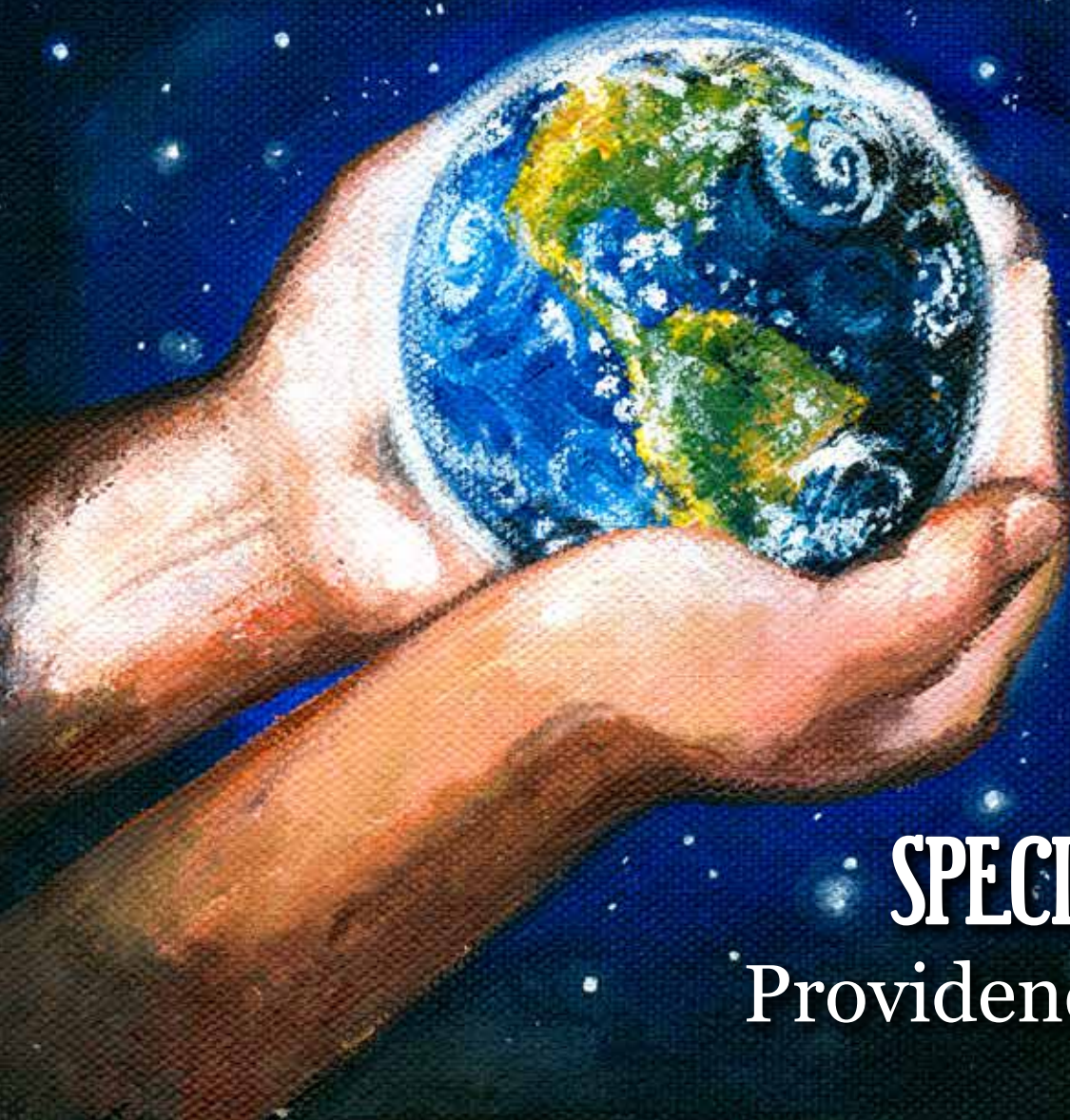
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# Truth

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**SPECIAL ISSUE:**  
Providence of God



by Mike Willis

# The Providence of God

**T** *This issue of Truth Magazine presents a series of articles on the providence of God. We want to thank Daniel King, Sr. for putting together this series of articles – choosing the topics and the writers to participate in the series.*

Understanding divine providence helps one to cope with the vicissitudes of life. Stress is a part of life and how one handles that stress is related to his view of the world. Living without God is a different lifestyle than walking with God (Gen. 5:22).

Many have accepted a secular view of the world which eliminates God and, therefore, takes away any basis for hope beyond this life. Everything is left to the chance collision of molecules, even thought itself. The events of one's life are sometimes spoken of in such terms as the following: "As fate would have it," good or bad luck, "history is on our side" (as if history had some divine dimension), or "as nature would have it" or "Mother Nature" (as if nature had divine powers). Life has

no meaning or purpose when God is removed from one's world view.

The Bible teaches that God is in control of all things and that the events of the human life under His direction are moving toward a grand, final conclusion in which He rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. God not only created the world (Gen. 1-2), but also God sustains His creation (Acts 17:28; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3). He rules over the forces of nature (Psa. 147:8f.) and the wild animals (Job 38-41). Not even a sparrow falls to the ground apart from His divine will (Matt. 10:29). God's control of the universe extends to His human subjects as well. He is aware of the hairs of one's head – the most insignificant parts of one's life (Matt. 10:30).

Belief that God is personally involved in human life is the basis for prayer (Matt. 6:8; 7:7). God promised to watch over mankind to such an extent that one cannot be tempted above his ability to bear and that, with each temptation, God will provide a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). He has promised never to leave or forsake His children (Heb. 13:5-6), just as He was with Paul throughout the ordeals of his trial. Paul said this about the Lord's presence at his trial: "At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. *But the Lord stood with me* and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might

hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim. 4:16-17).

Paul told the Philippians of a "peace that passes all understanding" that he found in the gospel, which peace "will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6). There are many aspects of this peace, including the knowledge that one's relationship with God is one of peace and not alienation. This relationship rests on Christ, who is our peace (Eph. 2:14); He "came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (Eph. 2:17). There is also a peace that comes to one's soul in the knowledge that God is the one ultimately directing the affairs of one's life, sending into one's life those things that might build and direct his character.

Consider the case of Paul. The Apostle to the Gentiles was given a "messenger of Satan" to buffet him, lest he be exalted above measure (2 Cor. 12:7). Paul asked the Lord to remove this affliction but God refused saying, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul's reaction was this: "Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

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by Daniel H. King, Sr.

# Some General Principles Associated with Divine Providence

**L**ike many subjects in the Bible, there is a great amount of erroneous teaching and misconceptions concerning the nature and person of the Holy Spirit. This, in part, leads to a misunderstanding of other aspects of the Spirit's work such as the baptism, the indwelling, the promise, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The English word "Godhead" is akin to the word "Godhood" which means "possessing the qualities of deity," much as the word "motherhood" would speak of a woman who was a mother to children.

The term "providence," which is derived from the Latin word, *providentia*, but conceptually comes from the Greek term *pronoia*, suggesting foresight or making

provision beforehand, is traditionally utilized to describe actions taken by Almighty God within the universe. This work is done invisibly and undetectably, in order to work all things for the good of the righteous and for the temporal punishment of the wicked. The word itself never appears in Holy Scripture, but the concept is found on almost every page of the Bible. It is in fact so widely found therein and its themes are so pervasive that it is difficult to generalize about it because only a selective representation of the ideas about it may be proffered without becoming overly verbose in a medium like the present one. So, we shall stay with very basic concepts.

The biblical view of deity sees God as Creator, but also as ruler of his creation, governing it carefully and continuously either as a loving Father or as a perfect Judge, as the particular case may require. So, in the end, faith in the working of providence suggests that Deity orders all events within the universe in order that the end for which it was created may be realized. That end is that all creatures should manifest the glory of God, and in particular that man should glorify Him, recognizing in nature the work of His hand and the genius of His eternal mind, serving Him in obedience and love, and thereby attaining to the full development of His spiritual and material nature, and in the end enjoying eternal happiness in God. Providence, as this definition demonstrates, is not a simple subject.

It is our plan in the present essay to set forth a set of general principles which outline the essential nature of God's providential care of His creation, including, of course, the

human family. Hopefully, these principles will prove helpful to the Christian who is attempting to understand this important aspect of the Word of God and of the Lord's working in the world. It needs to be remembered that we worship a living God, one who is quite different and distinct from the concept of deity that is held by the deist. One who holds to the deist notion of God believes that, even though He created the heavens and the earth, He is not active today in its functioning or continuing activities. A deist thinks of God as the one who wound up the clock of nature only to allow it to wind itself down on its own energy and initiative. He does nothing to interfere with it, either for good or ill.

The Psalmist would not have shared this idea of deity. He said in Psalm 104:10-21 that even the lowliest creatures look to God for their continuous sustenance and see Him as active in ongoing activities of the material world:

You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills; they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches. From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart. The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars

**Some General Principles Associated with Divine Providence***Continued from Page 4*

of Lebanon that he planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers. He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep about. The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.

Paul asserted that the God in whom we believe and place our trust is a God of ongoing action, in Him “all things hold together” or “subsist” (*ta panta en autō sunestēken*, Col. 1:17). This suggests a continuous activity on the part of God to maintain equilibrium or stasis in the physical world. Hebrews 1:3 teaches the identical concept, saying that the Lord “upholds (or, sustains) all things by the word of his power.” God did not wind up the world and let it go off on its own; He has continued to be active in its working from the very beginning. He only rested from creating after His initial creation (Gen. 2:2); He has never ceased being intimately involved in its continuance, maintenance, or preservation. Jesus said, “My Father is working until now, and I am working” (John 5:17), and this was a discussion of what He was doing on the Sabbath day!

Therefore, when the unbeliever queries as to why a giant meteorite

has not up to now destroyed the earth and wiped out all of life on the planet, the believer simply answers that God has been protecting us up to this point in time. If the climate-change fanatic worries aloud that the oceans will rise, the polar ice caps will melt, and fertile lands will turn into arid wastes, the believer will nonetheless sleep well at night, confident that the same Almighty God who created this world with a word from His mouth will continue to keep it in His loving care for the sake of those who have their confidence in Him rather than in the wisdom of finite man to fix the problems of the planet. When the scientist wonders frenetically about why a super-volcano has not belched out smoke and ash, fire and volcanic gases and molten rock, destroying our pleasant civilization and erasing humanity from the earth, the Christian merely smiles and responds that God is in control and He will never permit such a thing to happen until He is ready to call for the Final Judgment. God is still very much at work in this world! That is the assumption behind the whole notion of divine providence. The Lord takes care of His people and metes out punishment, both in this life and in the next, upon the wicked.

So, stated simply, here are the basic assumptions of providence as it is taught in Holy Scripture:

1. *God is in control of the universe.* He is infinitely sovereign over His creation (1 Chron. 29:11-12; Ps. 24:1; 115:3; 135:6).

2. *Nothing and no one is able to defy God, either in this world or in the heavenly realm.* There are no other gods; He is alone, and nothing is impossible for Him (Deut. 4:35, 39; Isa. 45:5-6; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Tim. 1:17).

3. *God has an eternal plan for the world and for men.* This plan is the reason for the existence of all things and their continuance (Ps. 33:11; Prov. 19:21; Eccl. 3:14; Isa. 14:24-27; 46:8-11).

4. *God’s will and purpose for all things are realized in and through Jesus Christ.* He is at the heart of the plan, and nothing makes sense in this world absent His participation in it (Eph. 1:9-10; 3:11).

5. *While God’s plan has been revealed in summary fashion in the gospel, still there is much that is left unrevealed.* Therefore, we may not always be able to make sense of some of the various mysteries of life. They may prove to be quite beyond us, because only God is capable of fully understanding His thoughts and ways (Job 11:7-12; 26:14; 36:26; Eccl. 3:11; 11:5; Isa. 40:28; 55:8-9). So, our prayer ought ever to be, “your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10).

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by David Dann

# God and the Nations in the Old Testament

**The historical record presented in the Old Testament is not a general history of the world in ancient times, but is instead a history of the nation of Israel which descended from the patriarch Abraham. In order to unfold His plan to redeem mankind from sin God made three major promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).**

The Old Testament presents the record of the unfolding of God's plan by demonstrating how the descendants of Abraham became the nation of Israel, how this nation received its own land to possess, and how God worked to bring salvation for all nations of the earth into the world through that same nation. For these reasons, the Old Testament record is focused on God's interaction with the nation of Israel.

Although the non-Israelite nations are not the focus of the unfolding of God's plan in the Old Testament, the Scriptures do discuss God's interaction with many of them. Job summarized this interaction, saying,

"He makes nations great, and destroys them; He enlarges nations, and guides them" (Job 12:23). While the focus of Old Testament Scripture is placed squarely upon the nation of Israel as the vehicle by which God would bless the world, the sacred record demonstrates His concern for the Gentile nations as well.

God's dealings with the nations in the Old Testament serve as a grand demonstration of what is often referred to as "Divine Providence." "Providence," in this sense, is defined as: "God considered as the power sustaining and guiding human destiny; an event in which God's care is clearly shown" (*Webster's English Dictionary*). An examination of God's interaction with the nations in the Old Testament will demonstrate His providence in guiding the events of history toward His desired outcome. In order to appreciate God's providential dealings with the nations in the Old Testament it is necessary to understand the principles undergirding these dealings, the examples which portray these dealings, and the purposes behind these dealings.

## PRINCIPLES BEHIND GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THE NATIONS

### 1. God reigns over the nations.

The psalmist praised God, saying, "Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with understanding. God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne" (Psa. 47:6-8). God's providential dealings with the nations demonstrate that God reigns as the

supreme ruler over even the greatest and most powerful human rulers and most powerful human nations.

### 2. God is infinitely superior to the nations.

The prophet Isaiah wrote of God's superiority, saying, "Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales; look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless. To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?" (Isa. 40:15-18). Even the greatest world powers among the nations of men are considered "as a drop in a bucket" when compared to the greatness and power of Almighty God and it is a "very little thing" for Him to rule over them and make use of them in accomplishing His purposes.

### 3. God orchestrates the rising and falling of nations and rulers.

The prophet Daniel wrote that the king of Babylon was given a message from heaven informing him that, "This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men" (Dan. 4:17). In the repeated struggles between the nations of the world for power, wealth, and enlarged territory which are recorded in the Old Testament it must be understood that the outcomes of those struggles and the destinies of those nations were directed by the God of heaven.

**God and the Nations in the Old Testament***Continued from page 6***PORTRAITS OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THE NATIONS**

**1. Joseph.** Joseph, the son of Jacob and great-grandson of Abraham, was sold by his brothers into slavery, was taken to Egypt, and was wrongfully imprisoned in Egypt (Gen. 37; 39-40). However, in due time God allowed Joseph to interpret the troubling dreams of the king of Egypt in a manner which led the king to elevate this Hebrew slave to a position over the kingdom second only to the Pharaoh himself (41:1-44). Joseph understood that it was not by his own power, but by the providence of God, that he was raised to such heights in a foreign kingdom. He expressed his understanding of

**“This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men” (Dan. 4:17)**

these things to his brothers, saying, “But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life” (Gen. 45:5).

**2. Pharaoh.** The hard-hearted Pharaoh of the Exodus stubbornly refused to allow the Israelites to depart from Egypt when commanded by God through Moses to do so (Exod. 5:1-2). As a result, God unleashed

a series of ten devastating plagues upon Egypt. God's providential use of this stubborn Egyptian king was made known in the midst of these disasters as the Almighty spoke to him through Moses, saying, “But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth” (Exod. 9:16).

**3. Jonah.** The account of the Israelite prophet Jonah is unique in that he was sent by God to preach His word to a Gentile nation. God instructed Jonah, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me” (Jon. 1:2). Once Jonah finally obeyed God's instruction and preached a message of repentance to those in the Assyrian capital, the people repented and the Bible says, “Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it” (Jon. 3:10).

**4. Nebuchadnezzar.** The powerful Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, was used providentially by God to accomplish His purposes among the kingdoms of men. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God even refers to the Babylonian king as His “servant” in this sense (Jer. 25:9). While Nebuchadnezzar was not a servant of the Lord in the same sense as those who lived lives of faithfulness to Him, the king of Babylon and his nation were put to use in God's service in reducing various nations to captivity.

**5. Cyrus.** Cyrus, the mighty Persian conqueror who defeated Babylon, attributed his great success to the providence of God, saying, “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem

which is in Judah” (Ezra 1:2). Truly, God was orchestrating Cyrus' rise to power behind the scenes, even calling him by name long before his birth (Isa. 45:1-3).

**6. Esther.** Esther was an orphan girl of the captives of Judah who was brought up by her cousin Mordecai in Shushan, the capital of the Medo-Persian Empire (Esth. 2:5-7). After being chosen by the Medo-Persian ruler, Ahasuerus, to be his queen, Esther was warned of a plot against the Jews and was urged by Mordecai to use her influence to seek help from the king for her people (4:1-8). Her being in the right place at the right time demonstrates the providence of God in directing the affairs of powerful nations. As he urged her to speak to the king on behalf of her people, Mordecai spoke to Esther, saying, “For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (4:14).

**PURPOSES INVOLVED IN GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THE NATIONS**

**1. Preservation of God's people.** One of the primary purposes involved in God's interaction with the nations during the Old Testament period has to do with His preservation of the nation of Israel in connection with the promises which He made to Abraham. Joseph was made second in command over the nation of Egypt in order to ensure that the Israelites would not perish during a time of severe famine. Along these lines, he spoke to his brothers concerning their former mistreatment of him, saying, “But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people

## God and the Nations in the Old Testament

*Continued from page 7*

alive” (Gen. 50:20). Cyrus and his Medo-Persian Empire were used to reestablish the Israelites in their homeland following seventy years of captivity. Prior to Cyrus' birth, God spoke of the use He would make of this conqueror in providing for His chosen people and their dwelling place (Isa. 44:28). Esther was used by God to prevent the Jews “throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus” from being destroyed by the murderous plot of Haman (Esth. 9:2). Had Haman's wicked plan succeeded, the entire nation of Israel would have perished. God dealt with the nations in the Old Testament in such a way as to preserve His people alive.

### 2. Punishment of the wicked.

Another purpose served by God's interaction with the nations in the Old Testament era is that of bringing judgment and punishment upon the wicked. Once Israel took possession of the land of Canaan and became unfaithful to God in the days of the judges, the Bible says, “And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies” (Judg. 2:14). Following the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death, God used Assyria to conquer the northern kingdom of Israel as punishment for the sins of His people (2 Kings 17:18). On the other hand, God used Babylon to punish the southern kingdom of Judah for its sins (2 Chron. 36:17). At the same time, the Gentile nations were also held accountable by God for their wickedness and God would providentially orchestrate their demise, as He prophesied through Obadiah, saying, “For the day of the LORD upon all the nations is near; as you have done, it shall be done to you; your reprisal shall return upon your own head. For as you drank on

my holy mountain, so shall all the nations drink continually; yes, they shall drink, and swallow, and they shall be as though they had never been” (Obad. 15-16). God used the nations of the Old Testament era for the purpose of punishing the wicked.

**3. Power of God placed on display.** God's interaction with the nations of the Old Testament further served the purpose of demonstrating His magnificent power and glory to the world. Egypt was made powerful so that God could demonstrate His power over its king and its false gods, who were powerless to prevent the plagues, as Moses' father-in-law observed, saying, “Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them” (Exod. 18:11). The psalmist petitioned God concerning the Gentile nations, saying, “Let them be confounded and dismayed forever; yes, let them be put to shame and perish, that they may know that You, whose name alone is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth” (Psa. 83:17-18). God spoke of His judgments on the nations through the prophet Ezekiel, saying, “Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the LORD” (Ezek. 38:23). The true God of heaven displayed His power to the people of the world through His providential dealings with the nations.

**4. Plan of salvation in Christ unfolded.** Another vital purpose which was served in God's interaction with the nations of the Old Testament concerns the carrying out of His plan to save mankind through Jesus Christ. God's interaction with Egypt in the days of Joseph, with Babylon in the days of Jeconiah, and with the Medo-Persian Empire in the days of Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther served to preserve the people through whom the Christ would

come and, eventually, to secure their place in the land in which the Christ would be born. God's dealings with the nations of the Old Testament involved the orchestrating of events in preparation for the coming of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom. Daniel prophetically described the rise and fall of four major world empires, saying, “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (Dan. 2:44). God's use of the nations in the Old Testament facilitated the coming of Jesus Christ into the world to serve as the perfect sacrifice to take away the sins of mankind.

## CONCLUSION

Through God's providential dealings with the nations in the Old Testament, salvation has been made available to those of all nations under the new covenant of Jesus Christ. Following His resurrection, the risen Savior instructed His apostles, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20). God's dealings with the nations have made it possible for those of all nations to become His people through obedience to the gospel of His Son. Have you surrendered your life to the Most High who rules over the kingdoms of men?

David Dann, ddann1@hotmail.com. David Dann has been working with the West Main church of Christ in Lewisville, Texas since 2010.







by Mark Mayberry

# “Does God Work Providentially Today?”

**Answering the question, “Does God work providentially today?” requires a proper understanding of the term and a clear understanding of Scripture.**

How does one define “providence”? *Dictionary.com* says “providence” refers to “(1) the foreseeing care and guidance of God or nature over the creatures of the earth; (2) God, especially when conceived as omnisciently directing the universe and the affairs of humankind with wise benevolence; (3) a manifestation of divine care or direction; (4) provident or prudent management of resources; prudence; (5) foresight; provident care.”

The Greek word *pronoia*, occurring twice in the New Testament, refers to foresight or forethought, i.e., “thoughtful planning to meet a need” [BDAG]. When Paul was tried before Felix, the prosecuting attorney, Tertullus, began his speech by praising the governor: “Since we have through you attained much peace, and since by your *providence* reforms are being carried out for this nation, we acknowledge this in every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness” (Acts 24:2-3). Note its usage in Romans 13:13-14, which reads, “Let us behave properly as in the day, not

in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no *provision* for the flesh in regard to its lusts.” Stated positively, Felix was praised/flattered for his beneficent oversight of the Jewish people; stated negatively, we must not deliberately purpose to fulfill the lust of the flesh. Men can act with forethought, either for good or ill. In contrast, God’s providential forethought is always for good, in furtherance of truth and right.

**The Book of Daniel repeatedly affirms that God reigns in the kingdoms of men, giving power to whomever He chooses, raising up and casting down (Dan. 2:21; 4:17, 26, 32; 5:18-21)**

Does God work providentially today? Let us answer this question by asking several other related questions:

**Does God answer prayer today?** Teaching the disciples to pray, Jesus emphasized things important to God (praise, purpose, proper response) and significant needs of men (provision, pardon, and prevailing over temptation) (Matt. 6; Luke 11:1-3). Other objects of prayer are enjoined in Scripture: We should pray for kings and all

who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity (1 Tim. 2:2). We should pray for those who are sick, that they might be restored (James 5:14). We should pray for the spiritual growth and maturity of fellow-Christians (Col. 1:9-10).

**Does God still rule in the kingdoms of men?** Indeed. The Book of Daniel repeatedly affirms that God reigns in the kingdoms of men, giving power to whomever He chooses, raising up and casting down (Dan. 2:21; 4:17, 26, 32; 5:18-21). Presenting his sermon on Mars Hill, the inspired apostle said, “He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17:26-27). By urging disciples to pray for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead tranquil lives in all godliness and dignity, Paul affirms the continuing validity of this principle (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Has this reality changed? Has God’s power and authority diminished? Of course not.

**Does God still have a purpose for mankind?** Certainly. Ephesians 3:10 speaks of the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are called according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 1:9). Will He preserve the church of Christ? When Peter made the good confession, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” Jesus answered

**“Does God Work Providentially Today?”**

*Continued from page 10*

“Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it” (Matt. 16:18). Believers have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb. 12:28).

**Does God still provide for His people?** Yes. The Psalmist said, “I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his descendants begging bread” (Psa. 37:25). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus affirms that God will provide food, clothing, and shelter to those who faithfully serve Him (Matt.

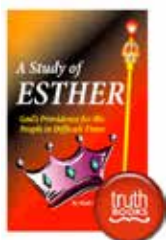
6:24-33). Do faithful disciples today enjoy this same assurance? Of course!

**Does God still protect His own?** Absolutely. No malicious foe can snatch us from the Father’s hand (John 10:27-30); no malignant power can separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:33-39). No temptation has overtaken us but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that we will be able to endure it (1 Cor. 10:13). Again, the

apostle said, “The Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one” (2 Thess. 3:3).

Does God still remember His promises? Without doubt. Providence is clearly implied in the many “I will...” passages of promise. Consider God’s threefold promise to Abraham of land, nation, and Seed (Gen. 12:1-3, 7). Note His assurance of deliverance from Egyptian captivity (Gen. 15:12-16). Reflect upon His oaths relating to the restoration of Israel (Isa. 44:26; Jer. 7:19; 16:14-15; 30:1-3; Amos 9:11). Consider His commitment

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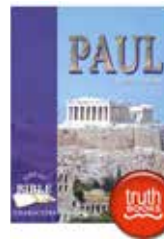
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**“Does God Work Providentially Today?”**

*Continued from page 10*

regarding the Messiah/Christ (Deut. 18:18; 2 Sam. 7:12; Jer. 23:5).

**CONCLUSION**

God still answers prayer today. He still rules in the kingdoms of men. He still has a purpose for mankind. He still provide for and protects His own. He still remembers His promises. Therefore, we assuredly believe that God works providentially today.

Yet, we must recognize the relationship between divine providence and personal

responsibility. God provided a ram to sacrifice in the place of Isaac after Abraham demonstrated willing obedience (Gen. 22:1-14). God provided for the physical needs of Israel when they walked in His statues and kept His judgments (Lev. 26:3-10). God delivered Esther and the Jews as she courageously brought the report of Haman’s plot before King Ahasuerus (Esth. 4:1-16). God will provide us with the physical necessities of life, but we must seek first His kingdom and His righteousness (Matt. 6:24-33). He has blessed us with the

spiritual necessities of life, but we must diligently study and apply His word (2 Pet. 1:2-3). He will deliver us from temptation, but we must diligently look for that way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13).



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by Michael Hardin

# How Is Providence Related to Angels?

**The Bible is a revelation of Almighty God and His concern and relationship with mankind as He works for man's good upon this earth and His glory throughout eternity. Jehovah is revealed in the Bible as the creator of the universe and mankind.**

“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth” (Ps. 33:6, NKJV). This universe in which man lives shows design, purpose, and orderliness which proves that it came from the hand of an intelligent creator who possesses a purpose for this world and mankind. God Almighty is the creator, sustainer, and controller of this wonderful world where mankind lives.

The word “providence” is generally used to describe God’s working in the natural and spiritual realms. In reference to God, providence means foresight and forethought which enables the infinite God to create a universe that He could control by His laws and give man the freedom of choice, but God is able to overrule in that universe and still achieve His

purpose. God rules in three areas: (1) the physical creation (inanimate-material); (2) the animal creation; and (3) the moral creation (mankind).

## WHAT IS PROVIDENCE?

The Biblical concept of “providence” carries the idea of God’s forethought and foresight in creating a material world where He has the ability to exercise His control and will, while at the same time providing mankind the freedom of choice to exercise His will. The necessary components of God’s providence are:

1. God is the divine creator of our universe and He has the power to control His creation (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 148:5; Rev. 4:11).
2. God continues to oversee and sustain His universe today. He now “upholds all things by the word of His power” (Heb. 1:3).
3. God has provided mankind laws to govern and guide his life upon this earth both in the physical and moral worlds. The laws by which man’s world operates is an expression of God’s will for man.
4. Mankind is subject to all laws of nature and will suffer consequences upon violation of natural law. Blessing is the result of obedience; accidents, suffering, and death are the consequence of disobedience.
5. The laws of God are designed for the moral and spiritual training of mankind (James 1:2-5; 1 Pet. 1:5-6).
6. God has the power and ability to allow mankind the freedom

of choice in his daily life, but also to use man’s choices to accomplish his purpose.

7. God can directly alter the course of human events, if He wills, in answer to the prayers of His children (James 5:13-18; 1 Pet. 3:12).

God is the creator, lawgiver and governor of the universe in which mankind lives. God does not make mistakes; but always performs what is righteous and His purpose is always for man’s benefit. God will always operate in harmony with His will and His character. God does not force mankind to obey His will. Mankind has the God-given freedom of choice to do with his life as he desires.

**Jesus said, “My Father is working until now, and I am working” (John 5:17),**

## WHAT IS AN ANGEL?

The root word translated “angel,” in both the Old and New Testaments, means “messenger.” The Hebrew word, *mal’ak*, emphasizes the fact that angels are God’s agents who represent the One who sends them. Similarly the Greek word, *angelos*, represents angels as divine messengers, ambassadors sent by God. Faithful angels are obedient servants of God. These words describe an office rather than a nature; they tell us what angels do rather than what they are.

**How Is Providence Related to Angels?***Continued from page 12*

The Word of God presents angels as a company or host of heavenly beings who are subordinate to God and who share His company and reflect His glory and majesty. “The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; And His sovereignty rules over all. Bless the LORD, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word! Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, You who serve Him, doing His will” (Ps. 103:19-21, NASB).

Angels are the elect ambassadors or emissaries of God. Angels are presented and discussed only in relation to their function as dutiful servants of the sovereign God. Angels direct our attention to God and not to themselves. Hebrews 1:13-14 tells us that these spiritual beings were created by God to serve as ministers to us, the heirs of God’s salvation. “But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool’? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb. 1:13-14, NKJV). The variety of functions of these spiritual beings can be summarized in their title of Hebrews 1:14, i.e. “ministering spirits.”

**WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF ANGELS?**

In general, angels simply do God’s bidding, whatever that may be. Angels are not bound by natural laws that limit humans, and they symbolize God’s active involvement in the lives of mankind.

**WHAT DO ANGELS DO?**

1. Angels are helpers and protectors to God’s people in need (Pss. 34:7; 91:11).
2. Angels come to reassure God’s people and to offer hope (Jesus, Matt. 4:11).

3. Angels come to give us guidance and direction (Old Testament, Gal. 3:19).
4. Angels come to call men to special missions (Moses at the Burning Bush, Exod. 3:2)
5. Angels come to rescue God’s people from some great danger (Lot, Gen. 19).

Angels, as intermediaries between God and man, bridge the gap between the unseen world of God and the created world inhabited by man, in order to communicate God’s word and will to mankind. Angels have been involved in the world’s most important events.

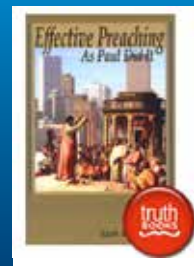
1. Angels were involved in the miracles that won Israel’s release from slavery in Egypt.
2. Angels observed the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.
3. Angels administered Old Testament Law.
4. Angels announced the Savior’s birth.
5. Angels ministered to Jesus Christ at Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion.
6. Angels rolled the stone away from the empty tomb where Jesus had been buried.
7. Angels announced Christ’s resurrection to the women who came to minister to the body of Jesus Christ.

**WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF ANGELS TODAY?**

God’s plan of salvation for mankind is complete. The divine revelation of God’s word is complete and perfect (2 Tim. 3:16-17). God is still active in the lives of His children today. “Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly

beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” (Eph. 3:20, NASB). Divine providence is a distinctive feature or attribute whereby the omniscience and omnipotence of the infinite God is expressed toward His creation, with special consideration for those of the creation who are faithful and obedient children. Let us believe in God’s providence and walk by faith in it. There is no indication of how God uses angels in the lives of Christians today. We know there are no miraculous appearances of angels today.

Michael Hardin recently moved to work with the Mill Street congregation in Leitchfield, KY. [Michaelhardin230@windstream.net](mailto:Michaelhardin230@windstream.net)

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by Kyle Pope

# The Intricacy of Divine Providence: Is God To Be Blamed for Human Wickedness?

Any concept of God’s involvement with His creation must (in some way) answer the problem of God’s relationship to evil. 300 years before the time of Christ, the Greek philosopher Epicurus, coined what is known as the Epicurean Paradox, which argued that if God can remove evils and doesn’t then He must be evil – if He can’t remove them then He isn’t God.<sup>1</sup> Centuries later the eighteenth century Scottish skeptic David Hume, restated this argument asking of God, “Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?” (*Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 10).

In religious discussions this

<sup>1</sup> Epicurus’ argument is preserved in a work by Lacantius (ca. AD 240-320) entitled *On the Anger of God* (13). The full argument reads:

God... either wishes to take away evils, and is unable; or He is able, and is unwilling; or He is neither willing nor able, or He is both willing and able. If He is willing and is unable, He is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God; if He is able and unwilling, He is hateful, which is equally at variance with God; if He is neither willing nor able, He is both hateful and feeble, and therefore not God; if He is both willing and able, which alone is suitable to God, from what source then are evils? or why does He not remove them?

Lacantius was an adviser to the Roman emperor Constantine and he quotes Epicurus to refute his view that the gods were distant, unconcerned, and uninvolved in the affairs of mankind.

problem has also arisen. John Calvin, the sixteenth century Protestant reformer, argued that the only answer to this was to view God as the cause of all things. In citing Lamentations 3:38 and Amos 3:6 he argued that “good as well as evil was produced by the command of God” (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.17.8). To answer the charge that this would make God the cause of things contrary to His will, he said it is “the feebleness of our intellect” that keeps us from understanding how God “wills and wills not the very same thing” (*Ibid.*, 1.18.3). Calvin’s followers tried to resolve this inconsistency by claiming that the power, wisdom, and goodness of God caused “the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men” and yet God somehow did it in such a way that human sinfulness comes, “only from the creature [i.e. human beings], and not from God” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, “Of Providence,” 5.4). This did not resolve Calvin’s inconsistency. How can evil be the “command of God” and yet come from man and “not from God”?

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

The Bible is not a systematic philosophical encyclopedia, but it is the revelation of God to particular people, on specific issues, within given contexts. It reveals what is needed for human beings to “be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Any concept of God’s relationship to evil must be carefully framed by the

bounds set within Scripture. This demands some very basic questions:

### 1. WHAT IS EVIL?

In English the noun evil is defined very narrowly to mean “profound immorality, wickedness, and depravity, esp. when regarded as a supernatural force” (*New Oxford American Dictionary*). In Scripture, however, the words translated “evil” are much broader. In the Old Testament the Hebrew verb *ra’á* meant “to be bad, to be evil” (BDB). In the New Testament, the Greek adjective *kakos* can refer to things that are simply “troublesome” or to things that are “wicked” (Thayer). This is where some of the problem lies. Everything that is evil (as we use the term) could be said to be “bad,” but not everything “bad” is necessarily evil in any moral sense. A toothache, for example, is a bad thing. I might even use hyperbole and say “my toothache is evil,” but a toothache has nothing to do with “profound immorality” or “depravity.” It is not literally evil in any moral sense.

James tells us through the Holy Spirit, “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil (Gr. *kakos*), nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed” (James 1:13-14, NKJV). James is likely using the word *kakos* in the narrow sense of moral “evil” in much the same way we think of it. God feels no allurements to “profound

## The Intricacy of Divine Providence: Is God To Be Blamed for Human Wickedness?

*Continued from page 14*

immorality” or “wickedness,” nor does He seek to entice us with such things. The Psalmist declares, “You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil (*ra*) dwell with You” (Psa. 5:4). In other texts, however, such as those that troubled Calvin, we must understand the sense differently. Jeremiah, for example, declared that “out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth” both “evil (*ra*) and good” (Lam. 3:38, KJV). We might recall that Lamentations is a song of mourning over the destruction of Jerusalem brought on as punishment for the sins of Judah. The NKJV translates this “woe and well-being” – this is not evil in a moral sense. Amos asked through the Holy Spirit, “shall there be evil (*ra*) in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?” (Amos 3:6, KJV). Amos was reminding the Israelites, who had been promised that they would fall to their enemies if they were unfaithful to God (Deut. 28:15-68), the danger that lay before them if they did not repent. The NKJV properly translates this “calamity” rather than “evil.” Isaiah, in another text to which Calvin appealed, quoted God in saying, “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil (*ra*): I the LORD do all these things” (Isa. 45:7, KJV). How could God create moral “evil” and yet at the same time say that He tempts no one with “evil”? Obviously, the sense of each of these passages is broader than the way we understand the word evil. In this final passage, the NKJV once again puts it “calamity” rather than “evil.” To allow something bad to happen is not the same as acting with “profound immorality” or “wickedness.”

### 2. WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF EVIL?

Scripture makes it clear that, although God allows hardship or calamity, He is not the cause of evil in its most narrow sense of “wickedness”

or “depravity.” In the same text in which James tells us that God tempts no one, he explains the source of human wickedness – “each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed” (James 1:14, NKJV). God has created man with desires that alone are neither good nor evil. All human desires have lawful outlets by which they can be fulfilled. My desire for food can lawfully be fulfilled by working for a living (2 Thess. 3:8). My desire for sexuality may be lawfully fulfilled in lawful marriage (1 Cor. 7:2-4). If I choose to satisfy my desire for food by stealing a loaf of bread, I have taken a natural desire and satisfied it in a sinful way. If I choose to satisfy my desire for sexuality with sex outside of marriage, I have done the same. Scripture calls this choice following “ungodly lusts” (Jude 18), or walking according to one’s “own lusts” (2 Pet. 3:3; Jude 16), and pursuing things that are the “desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Eph. 2:3). The source of this type of evil is not God – it is our own refusal to submit to His will for the satisfaction of our desires. The source of all human wickedness can be traced to some unlawful attempt to satisfy desire in a way that is contrary to God’s revealed will.

### 3. WHY DOESN'T GOD REMOVE EVIL?

The Psalmist declared, “Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just; for the righteous God tests the hearts and minds” (Ps. 7:9). Freedom of choice demands alternatives. Would a multiple-choice test with only one choice for each question really test a student’s knowledge? Why do democratic societies criticize totalitarian regimes that stage mock elections with only one candidate on the ballot? – Because choice demands alternatives. This life is a testing ground. As the text declares,

“God tests the hearts and minds.” This life is a test to determine if we will follow our own desires in our own ways, or submit to God. It is in this way that God determines if man will “seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17:27).

God is never the cause of evil in its most narrow sense of moral “wickedness,” but He does grant to man a brief period of time in which his choices to follow his own “ungodly lusts” can produce “wickedness” towards himself or those around him. Is it evil on God’s part to allow the opportunity for the evil man to harm others? No, first because He has commanded man not to do evil (2 Kings 17:13; Ezek. 18:32). When man does evil it is in rebellion to God. Second, He has limited the evil that man can do – our lifetimes are temporary (Gen. 6:3; Ps. 90:12). The wickedness that any man can commit can extend no further than his own lifetime, or the lifetime of the one he has harmed. Third, He will punish the wicked for their rebellion and any harm done to others (Jude 14-15). The Psalmist’s plea, “let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end,” will be fulfilled when God condemns the wicked and delivers His people.

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by David A. Cox

# The Difference Between Providence and Miracles

**The religious world is often given to extremes. Without doubt, this is true when it comes to how people view God's working in the affairs of men.**

Many cannot distinguish in their minds how God can work providentially without working miraculously. The fact is that God is active in our world today through providence using the natural laws. This is quite different from God working through miracles in which God set the laws of nature aside to affect some change or result He desired. With this in mind, it is critical to define and differentiate between a miracle from God and God working through providence.

## WHAT IS A MIRACLE?

In defining a miracle, one must look into the pages of Scripture and the context. This is of utmost importance because our society uses the word "miracle" very loosely. The word "miracle" is commonly used to name incidents that have a slight chance of occurring. For example, the 1980 U.S. Hockey team won the gold medal against the Soviet Union; this was called the "Miracle on Ice." In January 2009, a US Airways Flight, after leaving LaGuardia Airport in New York City, struck a flock of geese and the pilot made an emergency landing on the

Hudson River. This was referred to as the "Miracle on the Hudson." The wonderful event of bringing a child into this world is often described as "the miracle of birth." All of these examples are amazing events. The chances of these things happening would seem highly improbable, if not nearly impossible. We may be amazed and unable to express our amazement, but they are not truly "miracles." They do not measure up to what the Bible refers to as miracles.

A miracle is an event observable to the senses that exceeds all natural laws and can only be explained on the basis of supernatural power that comes from God. All of the above mentioned events do not meet the standards set by the definition. In the Scriptures, miracles are sometimes called wonders, signs, power, or works. Examples of miracles in Scripture are:

Exodus 14:21 – *"Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided."* Moses stretched his hand out over the sea, and the waters parted. There is no way, by natural law, that the stretching out of a hand would cause winds to blow or waters to separate. This was a true miracle that came from God.

Numbers 21 – The children of Israel had been bitten by the fiery serpents and were dying. The Lord told Moses, *"Make a fiery serpent, and*

*set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.'* So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived" (Num. 21:8-9). The children of Israel that were bitten looked on the serpent of brass and were healed. This was truly a miracle; an event made possible by the supernatural power of God.

Acts 3 – Peter and John were entering the temple at the gate called Beautiful. There was a man, lame from birth, that was laid at the gate daily to ask alms of those entering. As Peter and John were beginning to enter the temple, the lame man asked alms of them to which Peter said, *"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.'* And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and anklebones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement



**The Difference Between Providence and Miracles***Continued from page 16*

at what had happened to him" (Acts 3:7-10). As the council described this event, "indeed a notable miracle" (Acts 4:16) had occurred. Again, it is only through the supernatural power of God that this man, who had been lame from birth, received the ability to walk.

The Scriptures contain many more miracles, signs, wonders, and works of God that can only be explained by the supernatural power that God has; true miracles that God used when confirming His revealed will to man.

**WHAT IS PROVIDENCE?**

The word "providence" is of Latin origin (*providentia*) which means to foresee. Providence involves God seeing a need or desired result and bringing events to pass to accomplish the desired result. Paul, speaking of God working in the affairs of life, said, "And we know that all things work together for good to those that love God, and to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Paul declared to those at Mars Hill, "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands....He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,...for in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:24-28). Indeed, the Scriptures speak of God over-seeing and His providential care.

The Scriptures record many examples of miracles performed by God, and which ceased after the first century. Although God does not work in the affairs of men with miracles, God works

providentially, through natural laws, to bring desired results to pass.

The best example of God's providence is seen in the life of Joseph. In Genesis 37, Joseph, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, received a coat of many colors from his father. The special treatment Joseph received from his father caused his brothers to hate him. Later, the brothers of Joseph were at Shechem tending the flocks. Jacob sends Joseph to check on his brethren. As Joseph came near to his brethren, they saw him and conspired to kill him. But Judah, his brother, devised a plan to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites, and they sold him to an Egyptian, named Potiphar.

Through a series of events, Joseph is cast into prison in Egypt and he interprets a dream of Pharaoh's. As the result of interpreting the dream, Joseph is made second in command and placed over the collection of food for the famine that is coming.

When the famine befalls, Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to buy grain. When they arrive, Joseph meets them and reveals himself to them and eventually Jacob's family was reunited with Joseph in Egypt. Joseph tells his brothers, "So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt" (Gen. 45:8-9). Joseph tells his brethren it was God that put him there.

In Genesis 50, Jacob died, and the brothers of Joseph are afraid of what he will do to them. Joseph speaks to his brethren and says, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Gen. 50:19-20). What a statement affirming

the providence of God! The sparing of the seed of Abraham, what God had promised to His people, was accomplished. Not everything in the life of Joseph was good and pleasant. Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites, sold again, and taken to Egypt, where he spent time in prison. But God was sparing His people.

There are other examples in Scripture that show God working in the lives of men such as the Apostle Paul being delivered from death's door on numerous occasions. Should we as Christians try to determine what is and what isn't providence today? No. We need to remember verses like: Deuteronomy 29:29, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God." Or, Romans 11:33, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" We can trust that God is working to fulfill His plan to the ultimate good of His people.

The difference in miracles and providence is not the question of "Is God working?" It is the understanding that miracles have ceased, but God continues to work in the affairs of this life to bring about His will. God works today through providence using nature, man, and other natural means to bring to pass what He desires...the spiritual good of all men. Although many will not choose to follow the path that will lead to eternal life in heaven, God will always be working for the ultimate good of those who seek Him and His will (1 Pet. 3:10-12).

David A. Cox has been preaching for the Market Street church of Christ in Athens, Alabama since 2008.



by Bobby Graham

# God and Providence in the Book of Revelation

**T**oo often people read the Book of Revelation with such focus on the figures and symbols that they miss the greater principles taught and lessons emphasized. After all, is not that the approach which we have almost been trained to pursue?

Lampstands, stars, beasts, harlots, lambs, and other such images always rank ahead of God’s working in the lives of men and through the nations of earth, don’t they? To follow such an approach is to miss the principal message of this great New Testament book!

While it is true that the Spirit-guided John wrote symbolically for the benefit of his first-century readers, he was truly pointing them to ideas that could strengthen them for trying times. If they labored primarily to decipher the symbols or to ascertain the date of the book, as many now do, they might have looked past the real points which the Lord knew they needed to maintain their faith in Christ.

## CHRIST ON HIS THRONE

It is the thesis of this article that the Lord wished them to understand first that Christ is on His throne. I challenge each reader to read the

entire book to note references to the throne’s occupant. Saints passing through trials needed to know the Lord was still in control, so their welfare was never in doubt if they kept their faith strong. To this end the early chapters of the book (1-3) portrayed Christ among the churches – ruling, protecting, caring, knowing, approving, reproofing, and warning Christians to stay close to Him. Those in local congregations today should read the letters for different purposes, including that of a growing faith in the Christ who knows their state, strengths, and needs and correcting what He identifies as lacking. Such is the basis of divine providence in the Book of Revelation.

**The everlasting reign of Jesus Christ states that Christians then and now are not fighting a lost cause.**

The everlasting reign of Jesus Christ states that Christians then and now are not fighting a lost cause. As the book’s seven seals were opened in chapters 4-7, as the seven angels sounded trumpets in chapters 8-11, and as the bowls of wrath were emptied in chapters 15 and 16, it becomes evident that nature is under the control of the Son of God in His just dealings with humanity. The main lesson there stressed says that God knows His people and will care for them, for He was targeting their

enemies as objects of His wrath and judgment. Seals to reveal, trumpets to warn, and bowls to repay in wrath remained secondary in importance to the power of Christ on His throne, as He used such imagery to underscore His omniscience, omnipotence, and godly concern for His own in His overruling providence. First it was God on the throne in chapter 4; then it was the Lion-turned-Lamb at the throne in chapter 5. Repeated references to Him on the throne appear throughout the book. His worthiness to open the seals of the book, showing His wise management of the eternal purpose of the Father, was founded upon His place as Redeemer from sin. Amid the war, famine, and pestilence indicated by the seals was divine assurance of the vindication of God’s own and the triumph of His cause (6:9-11), which assurance found its reality in the place of the redeemed before the Lamb’s throne, where they serve Him in security (7:15-17). The prayers of martyred saints were not ignored in God’s providence. Here is the providence of God in foreseeing the needs of His people and meeting them consistently with their moral nature.

## FIGHTING A BATTLE

If the latter part of Revelation pictures the deeper spiritual background of what has been transpiring in the former section, it finds focus in 17:14: “These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful.” The dragon and two beasts ready to do battle with the radiant woman, ▶

**God and Providence in the Book of Revelation**

*Continued from page 18*

her Son, and other children of this woman appear in chapter 13; but their fighting is delayed till chapter 19, when a rider on a white horse joins the fray. From the beginning the Lord on the throne assured the battle's outcome, so the saints might confidently and powerfully fight with Him. Providence here also is seen: seeing the need and meeting it. The brutal end of all enemies of the Lamb in the lake of fire portends the battle's outcome (19:20; 20:10), while those allied with the Lamb enjoy the new heavens and new earth (21:1ff). They overcame to enjoy all blessings promised them in the Seven Letters.

Even the martyrs first seen as defeated victims under the altar in chapter 6 appear finally elevated on thrones with the Lamb in chapter 20. Satan's defeat, after the evil he perpetuated in the world, is clear in his binding and eventual place in the lake of fire. Just as the dragon and others were condemned, the Final Judgment pictures an accounting by all to the Lord. Providence again appears in the plan determined and executed by Deity for the punishment of the wicked and the vindication of the faithful (20:11-15). Comfort for the persecuted Christians in this battle was provided in the restraining of Satan's power for a time. Those who seemed to lose could be winners, because Christ would defeat Rome's power. They could overcome Satan, just as Christ overcame him.

**THE FINAL PROVISION**

The comfort and encouragement from earlier in this book sent to beleaguered saints all found fulfilment in their eternal rest with the Lord in chapters 21 and 22. The destiny of the redeemed is the final picture of John's moving drama. They enjoy eternal fellowship with the Lamb (21:1-8), protection by Him (21:9-26), and provision from Him (22:1-5). Persecutions currently

endured then give way to association with the Lord forevermore. Here also is providence as God saw their needs and met them. All of this would be accomplished because Christ was still on the throne. Though our situation

provide for saints. Many indications that God foresees and meets the needs have already been given. More evidence from Revelation is given here in the following list:

<b>God's Position of Providence</b>	<b>Foreseeing the Need of God's People</b>	<b>Meeting Their Need</b>
On the throne: 3:21; 4:10; 5:6; 7:17; 12:5; 22:1; 22:3	Completeness of Revelation: 1:4; 22:18-19	Redemption in Christ: 1:5; 5:9; 12:11
Omniscience: 1:14; 18	All-knowing: 2:2, 9, 12, 19; 3:1, 8, 15	Encouragement in Trials: 1:9, 17; 2:23-25; 12:9-11; 13:18
Power to Help: 1:14-16, 18; 2:8, 16; 3:7-8	Their Need for strength: 1:13, 20; 2:5, 10; 3:2, 10, 18-20	Eternal Life: 2:10; 3:4, 12; 7:15-17; 12:11; 14:13; 22:14

might differ in time and detail, we too can take courage in the same message because the Lord still reigns.

The reign of Christ on His throne does not mean that His subjects have nothing to do with the victory. The battle belongs to the Lord, but each decides with whom and against whom he fights in the battle.

And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death (Rev. 12:10-11, ASV).

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by Edward Bragwell

# Certainties and Mysteries of Divine Providence

**While I consider it a privilege to have been asked to contribute to this special series of articles on divine providence, my first impression was like the farmer who was carrying a load of firewood to town, runs over a railroad track jarring his tailgate out, causing all his wood to roll out – then his wagon sinks into a mud hole up to the axle.**

He gets off the wagon, assesses his situation and says, “Well, it looks like I am stuck with nothing to unload.”

The scope of God’s providence is so vast and its effect so profound that it is almost, like the peace of God, past all understanding. It is hard to wrap our minds around it and then to expound on it in a way easily understood. The title assigned to me bears out this observation because no matter how many certainties we may have in our minds about providence, there are still many mysteries connected with it that elude our best efforts to reign it in. So, we will just do the best we can to point out what the Bible teaches

on the subject. We will have little to say about the difference between miraculous divine interventions and providential interventions because that is to be dealt with in another article in this series.

Few believers in the person, power, and wisdom of God would deny the existence and importance of *divine providence* despite there being no specific mention of it in the Bible. The word *providence* appears only once in our more used English translations of the Scriptures. There it is used by the orator, Tertullus, in reference to Felix, the Roman governor’s *foresight* (NKJV) or *providence* toward the Jewish nation (Acts 24:2).

There are extreme views among professed Christians about God’s continuous involvement in the daily affairs of this world. On the one hand, some seem to think that God created the world, wound it up like a string-launched top, pulled the string, setting it spinning, then left it to spin itself out. At the other extreme, some think that God micro-manages every minute detail of their lives even down to directing them to a certain parking space or to directing a football they have kicked through the goal posts. To the one extreme, virtually everything is left to chance, to the other nothing is left to chance. The Bible is clear that, at least, some things do happen by chance. The priest, in the parable of the good Samaritan, came along “by chance” (Luke 10:31). Thus, we may not always know whether a specific event is a result of God’s providence or a matter He has left to chance. Also, in our consideration of this difficult subject we must be careful not to form a view that would

contradict two fundamental things pertaining to God and man. One is the sovereignty of God over His creatures and the other is the free-agency of man as created by God.

Various lexicons and dictionaries give a number of similar formal definitions of *providence*. For our purposes, we will simply use the popular meaning of God’s ongoing management and care for all of His creation – including man as the crown of His creation. There is nothing more clearly taught in the Scriptures than the doctrine that God perpetually manages, oversees, and cares for His creation – “the world and all things therein.” There are many things we can know about divine providence because they are revealed. But, we must be content with the fact that there are many things about the workings of God that are “past finding out” (Job 9:10; Rom. 11:33). Most of the “certainties” in God’s providence are in the area of *what* is done and most of the “mysteries” in the area of *how* it is done. We must not allow the “mysteries” to shake our faith in the “certainties,” nor vice versa.

In order to understand more about divine providence, it is important to distinguish between God’s ordinary general providence and special providential interventions from time to time. Also, the difference between God’s general provisions for His whole creation and His special providence for His children. Jesus used examples of His Father’s general providential care for His creatures (birds and lilies) to teach His disciples about the Father’s special care for His disciples (Matt. 6). It is true that man’s very existence depends on

**Certainties and Mysteries of Divine Providence***Continued from page 20*

the providence of God. “For, it is in him that we live, move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). He also “makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt. 5:45). So, the very rising of the sun every morning is an act of divine providence as is every rain drop that falls upon the earth – all being parts of God’s general care of His creation. These benefits come to all unconditionally without any action of their part. But, some rain may come as a result of a special act of God’s providence in response to the prayers of righteous people. Elijah, a righteous man, prayed and God withheld His rain from a certain portion of His creation for three years and six months. He prayed again and God sent His rain once again (James 5:17-18). Did this rain appear any different from all the rains of the past? Only in that it may have seemed to be a little long in coming. It did not rise to the level of a miracle (sign or wonder), but came from a cloud that had formed over the sea and intensified and moved over the land and dropped its rain. That was how it always rained in that part of the world! It appeared as a natural ending of a long dry spell.

Another difference that needs to be considered is the difference between divine providence and divine guidance. I hear some who speak of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as though He is an agent of God’s providence in the life of a Christian. I read of one account where one described how the Holy Spirit found and guided him to a much needed parking space at a time he was late for an event. There is no evidence whatsoever in the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit guides the lives of Christians separate and apart from the Holy Spirit inspired Scriptures today.

There are times when one can be reasonably sure that something is a

result of providential intervention, yet there are other times when one may be far less confident. We must remember also that certain things that are shown to be acts of providence in the Bible are being shown to us by those who had the benefit of divine revelation in determining such matters. Mostly one, without the aid of divine revelation, just has to look at the event and say, “who knows?” Mordecai was such a person. “And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: ‘Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet *who knows* whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?’” (Esth. 4:13-14, *italics mine EB*).

While we might like to see all the behind the scenes workings of God in the running of His world, especially that part that affects us, we must be content with the secret things belonging to God and the revealed things belonging to us (Deut. 29:29).

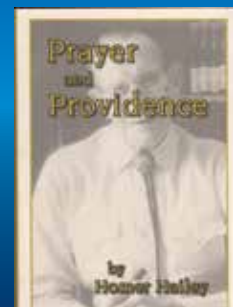
What then are we to do? We are to rely on the certainties revealed in God’s word and trust God to work out the mysteries behind the scenes. We will continue to pray and put matters in His hands to work out and implement the answer. We will continue to “seek first the kingdom of heaven” and trust Him to work out how He will add all these things (food, clothing, and shelter) to our lives. We will continue to thank and praise Him for these, because we believe they either come to us by His power through His general providence for His creation or His special providence for His children.

There are enough certainties of divine providence to motivate us to trust God to provide for us

while we are in pursuit of a better country. We do not have to solve all the mysteries associated with that providence to receive and benefit from it or to forge ahead with the confidence that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5).

Edward O Bragwell just completed seven years working with the Washington Avenue church of Christ in Russellville, Alabama. He has just recently moved to Morris, Alabama where he and his wife, Patsy, worship with the Kimberly church of Christ. After 58 years of local work with congregations in Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee, he is now devoting more time to gospel meetings and writing.

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by David Flatt

# Providence in the Life of Joseph

One of the more challenging subjects Christians have considered for thousands of years relates to God's providential interactions with His creation. It seems everyone has an opinion about God's providence. As long as time continues, the providence of God will perplex God's people.

The goal of this article is not to completely answer age old questions about God's providence, but rather, offer some helpful teaching about identifying God's providential actions.

First of all, we need to define the term "providence." This word's root is "provide," which means "to foresee." "Providence" means, "the foreseeing care and guidance of God or nature over the creatures of the earth; God omnisciently directing the universe and the affairs of humankind with wise benevolence; a manifestation of divine care or direction" (*Dictionary.com*). Divine providence involves the ability of God to foresee a need; thus, motivating action to

meet that particular need. God's eternal plan of redemption serves as an example of His providence. God foresaw the potential need of humanity to be redeemed. He lovingly provided a plan whereby redemption could be realized by an estranged humanity (Eph. 1-3).

The assigned subject of this article suggests an important pretext: God acted providentially in the life of Joseph. This pretext is accurate for an important reason relating to providence. We can know God acted providentially in the life of Joseph because we can read of God acting in such a fashion. Remember, truth can only be known certainly by reading what God has revealed: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Only the Spirit of God knows the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:10-11). Faith does not come by human speculation. Far too often, we allow our human speculation to define how God did or did not act. This is dangerous. However, in determining God's providence in the life of Joseph as documented in the Bible, there are important lessons we can learn.

First of all, the Bible notes God's providence early in Joseph's life. Raised in the lap of a father's biased love, Joseph's brothers conspired to kill him (Gen. 37). This led Joseph to be taken by a group of Midianites, sold to a group of Ishmaelites, and put into the possession of an Egyptian military captain, Potiphar. While he was serving in the house of Potiphar, Joseph ascended to a position of authority. Essentially,

Joseph was the manager of the homestead of Potiphar. His advancement was attributed to the providence of God. God caused Joseph to prosper. Potiphar's house was blessed by God for Joseph's sake (Gen. 39:1-5). The Bible is clear in identifying God's providence.

As Joseph was managing Potiphar's house, he was pursued by Potiphar's wife. While Potiphar was away, his wife made strong sexual advances toward Joseph daily (Gen. 39:7-12). She was relentless; however, Joseph maintained his spiritual integrity and resisted her. His resistance forced him to leave her and the house. When Potiphar returned home, his wife stated Joseph had tried to take advantage of her. Lies caused Potiphar to send Joseph to prison (Gen. 39:13-20).

After being imprisoned, we are informed of God's further providential actions in the life of Joseph. God caused Joseph to prosper in prison. He became a manager of the prison and forged a good relationship with the head prison guard. Joseph was trusted by the Egyptian prison guard (Gen. 39:21-23). While in prison, he accurately interpreted the dreams of two fellow prisoners: Pharaoh's butler and baker (Gen. 40). After two more years of imprisonment, Joseph was called upon by Pharaoh to interpret a disturbing dream. Joseph would be blessed by God to interpret a dream of Pharaoh. This resulted in Joseph becoming the second most powerful man in the nation until his death.

**Providence in the Life of Joseph**

*Continued from page 22*

The last indication of God’s providence in the life of Joseph was revealed to Joseph while he was ruling in Egypt. Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt to buy food during the second year of a terrible famine. Upon reuniting with his brothers, Joseph told them God had placed him in Egypt to preserve life (Gen. 45:1-8). The events of Joseph’s life were attributed to God’s providence. Had this information not been revealed to Joseph or us in the Bible, all would be left to speculate about why Joseph’s life unfolded as it did. This is not the case because God’s providence was revealed.

When reading of the life of Joseph, God’s providence can be clearly identified. For this reason, there are certain lessons we can learn about God’s providence.

**... God’s providence  
in the life of Joseph  
demonstrates God’s  
power.**

First, God’s providence in the life of Joseph demonstrates God’s power. Joseph was placed in extreme and dire circumstances on more than one occasion in his life. Each time, Joseph fell into the hands of powerful people. Nevertheless, God was able to impact Joseph’s life. Powerful people did not prevent God from being able to execute His purposes in the life of Joseph.

God’s power is one reason we appeal to God’s providence. For example, consider why we pray on behalf of the sick. When we petition God’s providential healing, we seek His healing above and beyond what

medicine can offer. This requires faith in the providential power of God to heal the sick. James wrote, *“Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him”* (Jas. 5:14-15).

Secondly, God’s providential intervention may not be what we expect. When Joseph was put in prison, Moses documents how God showed mercy to Joseph, and gave him favor in the sight of the prison guard (Gen. 39:21). Would we consider this being an example of God’s providence? Often, we expect God’s providence to make our lives easier. Joseph’s life was not made easier. His life was especially difficult. He was betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, and unjustly imprisoned. There seemed to be no end in sight to his adversity. However, God’s providence extended mercy to Joseph while he suffered.

Thirdly, God’s providence requires that we work. God’s ability to impact our lives is limitless. However, God’s providence does not excuse the effort we must exert to be productive and do His will. Yes, God caused Joseph to prosper, but he still had to work. He worked in Potiphar’s house. He labored in prison. He worked to run the government of Egypt. God’s providence did not allow Joseph to sit back and relax. The same is true of us. While God may providentially impact our lives, we must continue to use His word to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12).

In conclusion, the life of Joseph illustrates God’s providence. We must not doubt God’s ability to impact our world and to affect our lives. We must faithfully petition God’s providence in our prayers without

selfish pretexts. God may respond to us in surprising and unexpected ways. We must not allow our trust in God’s providence to prevent us from obeying God’s commands. God does not operate with partiality. Those who will be saved are those who obeyed His commands.


David and Elizabeth have worked with the Thayer Street congregation in Akron, Ohio since 2008. In October of 2013, they were blessed with a beautiful baby boy, Deacon.

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by Justin McCorkle

# Lessons on Providence from the case of Queen Esther

**A**n orphaned child raised by her cousin becomes the queen of a great nation and delivers her people from destruction.

The summary sounds like a fictional Hollywood plot, but this is the true story of the salvation accomplished through God's providential use of Esther as recorded in the book named after her.

Haman, the Agagite, hated the Jews during the days of their captivity under the Persians. King Ahasuerus had promoted Haman to the second highest position in the kingdom and Haman used his influence to initiate a plot to destroy the Jews. With the date of their sentence looming over the nation, Queen Esther, herself a Jew, convinced the king to save the people, execute Haman, and allow the Jews to defend themselves against their enemies. The account does more than record a history; it allows us to see the incredible workings of the providence of God. Consider a few of the lessons on providence the book of Esther provides Christians.

**Providence can be accomplished even through sin.** Our God is not the author of sin. He calls all people out of sin and reveals a righteous path to us in His word. Yet, it is sin that enabled Esther to begin her journey to the position

of queen for the salvation of her people. Ahasuerus was married to Queen Vashti and together they were hosting a great banquet. We read,

“On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded... to bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal crown in order to display her beauty to the people and the princes, for she was beautiful. But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command delivered by the eunuchs. Then the king became very angry and his wrath burned within him” (Esth. 1:10-12).

The command given to the queen was an evil command that Vashti was right to disobey. Some conjecture that he was implying her to enter before the guests in the nude while others believe she was merely rejecting being treated in a disrespectful manner. Regardless, Ahasuerus sent her away from him permanently." The king had sinned in these two ways of commanding evil and abandoning his wife. Without a woman's comfort he grew sad. “Then the king's attendants, who served him, said, ‘Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king’” (Esth. 2:2). Esther was among the virgins brought to the king and he had favor for her.

As best we can tell the Lord was working behind the scene to bring Esther to a position of influence. Thus we see the point illustrated that, although God did not cause Ahasuerus' sin, God can accomplish His will through sin. It is a great

comfort to know that the Lord's will is done despite the evil of man!

**Providence teaches us to value our relationships.** The providence in Esther teaches us that our relationships may be more important than we currently realize and to care for others accordingly. Mordecai adopted Esther, his younger cousin, after her parents had died. It says, “Mordecai took her as his own daughter” (Esth. 2:7). He loved her and nurtured her. After she was taken into the king's palace his influence on her is revealed: “Esther did not make known her people or her kindred, for Mordecai had instructed her that she should not make them known. Every day Mordecai walked back and forth in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and how she fared....Esther did what Mordecai told her as she had done when under his care” (Esth. 2:10-11, 20). She loved and respected Mordecai.

When Mordecai learned of the plot against the Jews, he wept at the king's gate. Esther's concern for him is made apparent again: “Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king's eunuchs...and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was. So Hathach went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king's gate. Mordecai told him all that had happened to him.... He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people”



**Lessons on Providence from the case of Queen Esther***Continued from page 24*

(Esth. 4:5-8). Esther's concern for Mordecai is what drove her to question him. Her love for him motivated her to carry out this task.

God was able to use the relationship that Mordecai had with Esther to accomplish His will. Mordecai had not planned for this event. He merely loved the ones he could and that made all of the difference. Likewise, we never know if there is a divine purpose for the relationships we have been blessed with. May we treat our families with love and respect, honor our neighbors, and bring glory to God in all of the relationships we have.

**Providence reveals God's exalted ways.** Haman found himself in the king's favor and purposed to use his position to murder Mordecai. He built gallows to hang Mordecai from and was planning to speak to the king the next morning. During the night, however, Ahasuerus came into contact with the providence of God and Haman's plot was foiled.

"During that night the king could not sleep so he gave an order to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the king. It was found written what Mordecai had reported concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who were doorkeepers, that they had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. The king said, 'What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?' Then the king's servants who attended him said, 'Nothing has been done for him'" (Esth. 6:1-3). When Haman arrived in the morning he was sent to bestow honor on Mordecai and, in the end, was hanged on his own gallows!

So many questions arise in our minds about this account. Why was the king unable to sleep? Why did he read that particular book? Why did he read that account? Our ability to truly grasp how God accomplished these things in His providence is a reminder to us of God's exalted ways.

Who can fathom the workings of the Most High? Who can understand His ways? None of us! Praise to the One who is Higher than all!

**Providence is a call action.**

There are times when it seems people discount their responsibility to act by claiming that "God will see to it." This mindset does not understand providence properly. A proper understanding calls us to action for the Lord without concern for ourselves.

When Mordecai requested that Esther approach the king about the coming assault on the Jews she explained to him the law: "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days" (Esth. 4:11). To do as Mordecai requested was to risk her life. "Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, 'Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews...you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?'" (Esth. 4:13-14). Mordecai shows a proper understanding of providence; God's providence may be accomplished through you if you have courage and do what is right.

Esther heard his plea. "Now it came about on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace in front of the king's rooms, and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room, opposite the entrance to the palace" (Esth. 5:1). She overcame her fear, looked for the providence of God, and entered the court of the king. Thus, she shows herself to be of the same character as Nehemiah who answered his

enemies, "The God of heaven will give us success; therefore we His servants will arise and build..." (Neh. 2:20).

God's providential abilities is a call to action, not inaction. Mordecai, Esther, and Nehemiah all understood this truth. Do we? If we trust in His providence we will get to work for Him!

**Providence reminds us to trust in God.** One final lesson we will consider from the book of Esther is the reminder for us to trust in God. As Mordecai aptly says to Esther, "if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place..." (Esth. 4:14). God's will is going to be accomplished. He will deliver His people as He always has.

Esther shows her trust in God by responding to Mordecai, "Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish" (Esth. 4:16). Esther was unable to see what the end would be for her, but that did not matter. Whether her fate be death or life God would be praised by her actions. Oh that we would have such trust in Him!

God provides in the end. The people were saved and Mordecai was exalted in the nation. The people overcame their enemies through the Lord. "For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor" (Esth. 8:16). The same will be true for us. God will provide for us a heavenly home, all will be well, and His will is going to be accomplished. Trust in Him above all else and be on the victorious side of God's providence!

Justin McCorkle is an evangelist at the Mauriceville Church of Christ in Mauriceville, Texas.





by Doug Roush

# Lessons on Providence from the Case of Simon Peter

**The Scriptures contain the promise of God providing for the needs of mankind, and especially the needs of the faithful.**

The subject of God's providence is an important part of God's revelation to mankind. That aspect of God's providence is discussed in other articles included in this special issue. The assurance of God's providence increases when we observe incidents of His providence in the lives of the faithful that are recorded in the Scriptures. The purpose of this article is to explore the incidents of God's providence in the life of Simon Peter.

Jesus taught, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6), and, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (Matt. 7:7-8). Notice how this promise of providence was carried out in the life of Simon Peter: "One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when

Jesus looked at him, He said, 'You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas' (which is translated, A Stone)" (John 1:40-42). Notice, John said, "We have found the Messiah!" This infers that John, the other one who was with him, and Peter were "seeking" the Messiah. John (and the other one who was with him) found Jesus through their association with John the Baptist. Peter was introduced to Jesus through his brother, Andrew. Every person who genuinely "hungers and thirsts for righteousness" can point to the means by which he was introduced to the Word of Truth and the relationship with God that developed from it (cf. Rom. 10:14; John 14:15, 21, 23).

**...Jesus also taught that God would provide for the physical necessities of those who prioritize the kingdom of God and His righteousness (cf. Matt. 6:25-33).**

In addition to providing for our spiritual necessities, Jesus also taught that God would provide for the physical necessities of those who prioritize the kingdom of God and His righteousness (cf. Matt. 6:25-33). There are at least five incidents of physical providence in

the life of Simon Peter recorded in the Gospels. Consider the following:

**The Great Catch – Luke 5:1-11.** Sometime after Peter had met Jesus, Jesus was teaching on the same shoreline on which Peter was cleaning his fishing nets. Jesus requested to use one of Peter's boats to teach from because the people were crowding around him so much that it was difficult to speak so that all could hear. After teaching, Jesus instructed Peter to launch out and to let down his nets for a catch. Fishing was Peter's livelihood. He had fished all night and had caught nothing. Reasoning from his experience, Peter thought it was pointless to attempt making a catch. Nevertheless, he complied with the instructions of Jesus and experienced an astonishing catch. While we often consider this catch to be a miracle, it is possible that it was a matter of "being in the right place at the right time." Whether Jesus caused the fish to be there, or He knew the fish had naturally moved to this location, the point is that complying with the instructions of Jesus provided this unprecedented catch. Peter's business was fishing. The income from the sale of this catch would provide for the necessities of Peter's family for quite a while. If he would continue to follow the instructions of Jesus, Peter's life would dramatically change. Jesus then told Peter, James, and John to follow Him and He would make them "fishers of men."

**The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-law – Mark 1:29-31.** Not long after Jesus had

**Lessons on Providence from the Case of Simon Peter***Continued from page 26*

invited Peter, James, and John to follow Him, He entered the house of Peter. There, Peter's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. Immediately, those in the house told Jesus about her, and He healed her. In this case a miracle was enacted to provide for her return to health. Today, God can use the means of medicine and the healing mechanisms He has designed in the human body to provide healing (cf. James 5:14-15).

**Physical Provisions for Those Who Were Sent by Jesus – Matt. 10, Mark 6:7, Luke 10:1-7; 22:35.**

When Jesus sent the twelve apostles, and later the seventy disciples, out to preach, included in His instructions to them was that they were not to take with them any food, money, or extra provisions. Later, He asked them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." (Luke 22:35). God had provided for them, just as He had promised (Matt. 6:33). The promise found in Matthew 6:33 is for everyone who will prioritize the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

**Provision for the Capernaum Temple Tax – Matt. 17:24-27.**

To avoid offending the officials, Jesus provided for the payment of the tax without taking money from the benevolent treasury they carried with them (cf. John 12:6). Peter was instructed to "go to the sea, cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take and give it to them for me and yourself." That a person might catch a fish with a shekel in its mouth may not be miraculous (fish are known to eat shiny things that fall through the water, as they may appear to be a dying bait-fish), but the particular instructions given to Peter by Jesus indicate that more than mere chance was in play here. This may, or may not, have been

a miracle, but it was certainly an incident of God's providence.

**The "Breakfast Catch" – John 21:1-6.** Some time after the resurrection of Jesus, Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and two other disciples went fishing one night. Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore and called out to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" When they answered, "No," Jesus told them to "cast your net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." They did so, and the catch was so great that they could not lift it into the boat, but had to drag it on to the shore. Again, this may or may not have been a miracle. (Fish are known to form into tight schools from time to time. The men were probably right-handed and therefore would be inclined to throw the net from the bow to the left side of the boat.) What is certain is that Jesus knew where the fish were; whether they were naturally there, or He supernaturally caused them to be there. Acting upon His knowledge, provided a great catch. Similarly, when we act upon the knowledge God has revealed in His word, we are provided the answers to life's most important and profound questions. God has not left us to grope in the darkness of intuition, acting on what may feel or seem right to us, but has, in His word, revealed to us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).

On the same occasion (John 21:15-17), Jesus provided Peter with the opportunity to reconfirm his love for Him. Previously, on the night of the betrayal of Jesus, Peter had three times denied that he knew Jesus. On this occasion, three times Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" Each time Peter answered in the affirmative, possibly with more conviction than he ever had previously.

The length of this article is not sufficient to include the incidences

of providence in the life of Peter as they are recorded in the book of Acts. However, to my knowledge, all of the occasions of providence in the life of Peter that are recorded in the book of Acts are provided through the work of the Holy Spirit and miracles. The apostles were promised by Jesus that they would be led into all truth through the work of the Holy Spirit, and indeed they were. In providing them with "all truth" through the Holy Spirit, we are provided with "all truth." Jesus instructed the apostles to teach the disciples to "observe all things....And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Peter and the apostles were confident of Christ's presence and providence as they continued in His word. We can be confident of the same. We do not experience it through miracles, but the apostles did not always experience God's providence through miracles either. Every time we see a prayer answered, or one of God's promises kept, through the eye of faith we see the hand of God at work in our lives, providing those things we have need of to live to the praise of His glory.

Doug Roush has worked with the Southside Church of Christ, in Bowling Green, Kentucky since September of 2005.



by Joshua Gurtler

# Lessons on Providence from the Case of Saul of Tarsus

## INTRODUCTION

There is no question that Saul of Tarsus was a hand-chosen vessel of God to bring Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. As the Lord told Ananias, *“Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake”* (Acts 9:15-16). Three days prior to this, Jesus told Saul, *“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.... Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do”* (Acts 9:5-6); and *“I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me”* (Acts 26:16-18).

## I. THE SELECTION OF SAUL OF TARSUS

Why was Saul providentially plucked from the myriad of brilliant young Jewish minds to fulfill God’s mission? Did the Lord force Saul to act against his will? Is that how God intervenes in the lives of men? Certainly not. God recognized specific talents and abilities in this young man, which, when providentially redirected, were used to execute His mission, in keeping with the fullness

of times (Gal. 4:4). Consider the following attributes and credentials that Saul already possessed, prior to being blinded on the road to Damascus, which made Saul the ideal vessel for God’s purpose:

- A. Born and raised according to Jewish standards, able to establish his Hebrew genealogy through the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5).
- B. Adhered to the strictest standards of the Old Testament (Acts 26:5; 22:3).
- C. A Roman citizen, affording him protective rights in his future ministry (Acts 22:25).
- D. A man of pure unstained conscience, always acting in the best interests of the Lord, as far as he knew (Acts 23:1).

## II. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS LEARNED FROM SAUL’S CONVERSION

Certainly the Lord intervened in Saul’s life in a supernatural way, which we should not expect to experience today (2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3; 1 Cor. 13:8, 13). If the Lord will not talk to us directly today through visions, dreams, revelations etc., then what practical applications can we make from Saul’s conversion?

### A. The Lord Requires as Much of Us as We Have the Ability to Perform

There are some requirements of the Lord, which may be considered “universal” for all mankind, such as are recorded in Micah 6:8; Ecclesiastes 12:13; 2 Peter 1:5-8;

Luke 6:38; Ephesians 4:32; Acts 2:38 and Romans 10:32. In other areas, more may be required of us than others **because we have greater abilities** in those areas. Paul later teaches that, regarding charitable giving, God requires of us, *according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have*” (2 Cor. 8:12). The same may be said for other innate talents and abilities that we have.

### B. Untested Talents are No Excuse for Spiritual Laziness

Although Paul acknowledged that we are not obligated to give beyond our ability (2 Cor. 8:12), in the previous verse, he suggested that we must have the **readiness** to give, in addition to the ability (2 Cor. 8:11). Too many untapped talents have the ability to give far more to God from their strengths, but they have no interest (readiness) in doing so. As one recently told me, **“people often use their perceived ‘lack of ability’ as an excuse to not serve the Lord, when they have not fully tested their talents to even learn whether they have that particular ability in the first place!”** Further, “giving until it hurts” is exemplified earlier in the chapter (2 Cor. 8:2, 3), where the Macedonians gave beyond their ability. The main point is that both Saul, as well as the Macedonian churches, **“first gave themselves to the Lord”** (2 Cor. 8:5). Then and only then was God able to fully use their innate abilities and gifts to the maximum extent, for His glory and for the betterment of mankind.

**Lessons on Providence from the Case of Saul of Tarsus**

*Continued from page 28*

**C. We Shouldn't Expect God to Miraculously Intervene and Redirect the Course of Our Life as He Did with Saul**

Why? (1) Saul did not have the fully delivered and compiled textual revelation of Scripture as we do today. (2) Saul was living in an era where the Lord chose to work miraculously in delivering the gospel to the world (2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3; 1 Cor. 13:8, 13). (3) Even though the Lord could have chosen to call Saul by other means, how do we know that God didn't carefully orchestrate the blinding of Saul on the road to Damascus as a strategic tool to more fully motivate Saul along his lifelong mission and martyrdom? The fact is, anyone who has access to God's word has just as authoritative instructions from the Lord as Saul had! Does it make any difference whether a policeman knocks on our door and summons us to court or whether we receive a written summons in the

mail? In this sense, our calling is more similar to Saul's than we might think.

**D. God Can Intervene in Our Lives through the Chastening Process**

God used, no doubt, a traumatic event to turn Saul aright. Although miraculous signs are not recognized as a tool the Lord uses today, God can intervene in our lives through the chastening process:

*"My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord....For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons"* (Heb. 12:5-8).

How do we ascertain when an event in our life is a result of the

chastening of the Lord and when it is not? I'm not sure there is a definitive way to know. But, in a sentiment similar to Mordecai, we can say, "who knows whether or not I was put in this situation for such a time as this?"

Any traumatic, startling, life-changing or distressful event should be a time for us to stop and reflect on the course of our life – a time for us to think, "*redirect ship, redirect ship.*" Saul of Tarsus did not **have** to heed the calling of the Lord. He was not **coerced** against his will. His life course was forever altered on the road to Damascus **because he chose** to alter it himself. We may never here know the number of times God has intervened through chastening in our lives; but if we heed God's word and redirect our course every time we are startled into spiritual reality, then we have responded appropriately... just as Saul did.



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by Gary Henry

# The Power of Providence in the Faith-Life of the Modern Christian

**God's "providence" is the fulfilling of His promise to "provide" for His faithful people in all of their needs: "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Eph. 3:20, 21).**

In the outworking of His purposes, much of what God does in the world is outside the scope of our knowledge or comprehension. But just as I do not need to know how my cell phone works in order to benefit from its use, we do not need to know the details or the mechanics of God's providence to be encouraged by His promises. It is enough to know that He is active in the world and that, in the end, all will be well.

This confidence makes a difference in the way we think, obviously, but it should also make a difference in the way we live! Without the assurance that God will "provide," we would bog down in a sea of uncertainty,

helplessness, and fear – but armed with a trust in (a) the goodness of God, and (b) His power to govern the world, we are able to take the simple steps that lie before us each day.

Between where we are right now and where we will be in eternity, the path may take many unexpected turns, but it is enough to know that at the end of the path, He is waiting for us, and in the meantime, He will "provide."

## OUR WORK IN THE LORD

All of us are involved in the Lord's work. Each of us has something to do in the body (1 Cor. 12:14-20), and we ought to have no higher priority than to serve faithfully in the work that is ours to do, whatever that may be. But most of us are plagued with questions about our individual work in the Lord. *Will I be able to do what is expected? What if my abilities are too small to meet the need? What if the responsibility is greater than I can bear? Will the nature of my responsibilities change in the future?* All of these questions, and many more, are answered by the promise of God's providence.

Paul would have had the same questions that we do, but his confidence was exactly what it should have been: "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). There will never be a time when we are faced with an impossible task in the Lord's work. Whatever He expects us to do, that is what He will enable us to do. We may not know how He will do so, and we may not be able to foresee the way in which the help will be provided,

but our trust in His providence keeps us working, one day at a time.

## PROBLEMS

In this world, broken as it is by sin, problems come in many shapes and sizes. It's probably true that most of us spend most of our time doing things that wouldn't need to be done in a problem-free world. Some of these problems are trivial ("The hot water heater is leaking"), but many of them are of great consequence ("My son is lost and alienated from God"). We could make a long list of words that describe what we have to deal with: difficulties, troubles, dilemmas, complications, sorrows, pains, heartaches, obstacles, temptations, persecutions, etc. The list is long, and we wouldn't disagree with Eliphaz, the Temanite, who said that "man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7).

We have only two basic choices: (1) bury our heads in the sand and pretend the world is in better shape than it is, or (2) deal with the brokenness of the world honestly. But if we choose to deal with it honestly, how can we keep from being overwhelmed with despair? Individually, we don't have what it would take to solve these problems, and if we're realistic, we have to admit that the human race is not solving these problems either. For every step forward we take, we create several problems that weren't there before. All things considered, the world is getting worse.

But, as the song says, "though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet." This is our Father's world, and He is guiding

**The Power of Providence in the Faith-Life of the Modern Christian***Continued from page 30*

it toward an ultimate conclusion that will be the fulfillment of His love and wisdom. Even now, He is working toward those purposes as He guides the course of human events providentially. Based on His proven trustworthiness in the past, we trust that what He is doing will overcome the threat of His adversary, Satan, and solve every problem that has ever arisen. If we are found in Christ at the resurrection, we will see that our personal problems were solved along with the problems of the world around us. This is our confidence and our hope. This is how we face our problems.

**UNCERTAINTIES**

Most of us demand a good deal more “predictability” from life than God ever promised we would have. We want to know what tomorrow will be like, but all that we have is today. As for tomorrow, Jesus said, “Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matt. 6:34).

The thing that we call “worry” is really nothing more than the fear of what might happen. When there is uncertainty, there is fear – fear that what is going to happen might be painful or difficult. But God’s answer

to our fears is not to tell us exactly what is going to happen so that we can make human preparations to deal with it. Instead, He promises that He will “provide.” That is, He will work providentially in the world and in our own lives to bring about the very best ultimate outcome. It is our trust in the providence of God that takes the worry out of our uncertainties.

**PRAYER**

All of this should make a difference in the way we pray. As I grow older, I find myself making fewer specific requests of God and more often simply praying that He will help me defer to His wisdom in the accomplishment of His purposes.

As a Father, He certainly wants us to make our heartfelt requests to Him, and it is a wondrous thing that He will sometimes yield to our requests and say, “Alright, My child, I am willing for this situation to end up as you have requested. I grant your wish.” But more often, I am learning to pray, “Father, I might have my preferences about what will happen, but more than that I simply want you to be glorified. I trust Your wisdom and Your power to guide all things to the goal that You desire. My prayer is that You will intervene in the situation that I am praying about, and

overrule the sinful designs of your adversary, Satan. I will give thanks for whatever outcome You decide is best.”

If we did not believe in the providential activity of God in the world today, as some do not, petitionary prayer would be pointless. For my part, I trust that God is at work in the world today, even though I know little of what He does or how He does it. This confidence encourages me to keep doing what I can in the Lord’s work, it helps me put this world’s problems into a larger perspective, it releases me from worrying about the uncertainties of tomorrow, and it makes a huge difference in the way I pray.

*“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen” (Jude 24, 25).*

Gary Henry is a writer and publisher. He travels extensively, preaching and teaching wherever he is invited. When he is at home, he worships with the Broadmoor Church of Christ in Nashville, TN.



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by Johnie Edwards

# Preacher Training Value

Preacher training has great value. Johnie and John Isaac Edwards have worked in preacher training programs for many years. They worked with the Talca, Chile church of Christ and the Northeast Church of Christ in Tupelo, MS last year. Fifty-five men, of all ages, attended these programs. Five obeyed the gospel during the program.

## THE TRAINING

The Edwards preacher training is a complete program. It is designed to teach young men how to study, memorize, find, put sermons together and preach them effectively, how to put Bible class material together and teach it in an effective manner, how to outline, building a good

preacher library, publishing a teaching bulletin, how to teach home Bible studies, putting out a newsletter, overcoming stage fright, radio preaching, answering religious error, learning to be a good listener, need for Bible authority, rules for understanding the Bible, working with elders, daily on-the-feet exercises, the men conduct a gospel meeting while in the program and much more!

## BOOKS

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**Preacher Training Value***Continued from page 30*

we have ever done.” The Northeast Church was really excited to see the young men make such progress in such a short time. In fact, the church set new attendance records at every service during the preacher training! Before we left, they scheduled another preacher training program for July 6-11, 2014, as you can see on their announcement in this issue of *Truth Magazine*.

**ENCOURAGES YOUNG MEN TO PREACH**

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John Isaac Edwards and Johnie Edwards are available to work with churches of Christ any place in the world, in such a preacher training. You can contact us by email at ([johnieedwards@gmail.com](mailto:johnieedwards@gmail.com) or [1977jie@gmail.com](mailto:1977jie@gmail.com)) or by calling our cell number (317-964-9404 or 812-320-4450), or you can write us at P.O. Box 251, Ellettsville, IN 47429. We look forward to hearing from you.

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**84th St. church of Christ**  
**1017 SW 84th St.**  
**Oklahoma, OK 73129**

There is no reason to assume that God's works in the life of Paul were unique to him alone. Does He not work in my life the same way as he did in Paul?

I find strength to face life's trials in the knowledge that God is watching over me to be sure that I am not tempted above my ability to bear (1 Cor. 10:13). I have confidence that I can come through the trial because of His promise always to provide a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). I draw strength from my remembrance of past conflicts through which God has delivered me, much as David found strength to face Goliath from his remembrance that God had delivered him from the lion and the bear (1 Sam. 17:37). I know my life has a purpose in the divine plan of God and that purpose will be filled by my continued obedience to His word.

Paul learned to accept his "messenger of Satan." He embraced his imprisonment at the hands of the Romans as his opportunity to suffer with Christ (Phil. 1:12-26). So also must I accept in quiet submission what God's providence sends to me, embrace it as His will for my life, and do my best in those circumstances to serve Him to the fullest of my abilities, according to the opportunities God lays before me. From the Roman prison, Paul preached to the Praetorian guard, eventually converting some of Caesar's own household (Phil. 1:13; 4:22), and wrote several epistles that became part of the New Testament (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon). In the narrative of Luke's history of the early church, Acts 13 through 28 are intimately tied with Paul's life story. Most assuredly God had a purpose in Paul's life that was accomplished through Paul's acceptance of God's providential direction of his life and his steadfast obedience to God's revealed will.

I am most confident that what was true for Paul's life is true for my own. God loves me and wants me to be saved. He showed me that unequivocally by sending His Son to die for my sins (John 3:16). I do not know how God is working in the day-to-day affairs of my life in a nation that is moving further and further away from a Christian world view and moral principles, but I am confident that He is directing human affairs. Come what may, I will trust in him, although I sometimes find myself going through all of the same emotions as Job did when he came to grips with how God was working in his life. Not knowing God's purpose, Job expressed his faith saying, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (13:15). Even though Job did not have the clarity of revelation made available to us through God's revelation of life and immortality in the gospel (2 Tim. 1:10), he reached a pinnacle of faith when he said,

For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
And He shall stand at last on the earth;  
And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,  
That in my flesh I shall see God,  
Whom I shall see for myself,  
And my eyes shall behold,  
and not another.  
How my heart yearns within me! (Job 19:25-27).

This is the reliance on God's government of the world that enables the suffering saint to pillow his head at night, trusting in the God who created him and loved him enough to send His only begotten Son to save him from his sins. God help me never to lose sight of this truth.

**Prayer:**

*Almighty God, our loving Father:*  
Teach us to trust in you for all of our needs and  
Not lean upon the things of this earth that may fail us.  
Our insurance company may deny our claims;  
Our parents may desert us or pass away from old age;  
Our friends sometimes disappoint us in turning away from us;  
Our jobs are sometimes lost through changes over which we have no control;  
But you, O Lord, never change!  
You are the same yesterday, today, and forever!  
Help me to learn to trust in You!  
And bless this issue of *Truth Magazine* to develop this trusting relationship with You!  
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we ask this blessing.  
Amen!

# ChurchDirectory

ALABAMA – FLORIDA

The following congregations have paid for advertising in *Truth Magazine*. Inclusion of churches in this list is not an attempt by *Truth Magazine* to certify their faithfulness to God. We do believe the vast majority are striving to uphold the Word in faith and practice.

To make changes to your ad, contact us at: [tmmikewillis@gmail.com](mailto:tmmikewillis@gmail.com)

<b>BIRMINGHAM, AL</b> Pine Lane Church of Christ 3955 Pine Lane Bessemer, AL (N. side of Exit #6 at I459) Bible Study 9:15 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: David Deason (205) 425-2352	<b>PARRISH, AL</b> McArthur Heights Church of Christ 5082 Hwy. 269 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 6:30 P.M. (205) 686-5978 or 686-5620	<b>FT. SMITH, AR</b> South 46th St. Church of Christ 2323 South 46th St. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Shawn Chancellor (870) 648-2898 or (479) 782-0588	<b>POCAHONTAS, AR</b> Westside Church of Christ Hwy 90 West (1/2 mile West of Hospital) PO Box 43 Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:45 A.M. Afternoon 1:00 P.M. Wednesday 6:30 P.M. Herbert Starr, Evangelist	<b>FOLSOM, CA</b> Church of Christ 900 E. Natomas St. P.O. Box 492 Worship 9:30 A.M. Bible Study 10:55 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: David Posey (530) 676-9514 or (916) 608-4866 <a href="http://www.folsomchurch.com">www.folsomchurch.com</a>	<b>MIAMI, FL</b> Church of Christ Eglise du Christ de Miami 8343 NE 3rd Ct. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Minister: Junot Joseph (305) 244-8295
<b>BIRMINGHAM, AL</b> Vestavia Hills Church of Christ 2325 Old Columbiana Rd. (near I-65 & Hwy. 31) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Harold Comer, Jason Cicero & David Banning (205) 822-0018 or 822-0082	<b>SCOTTSBORO, AL</b> Eastside Church of Christ John T. Reid Pkwy. (Hwy. 72, 2 mi. E. of Hwy. 35) Worship 9:00 A.M. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Wayne Chappell, Sr. (256) 574-1603 or 575-2664	<b>HARRISON, AR</b> Capps Rd. Church of Christ 407 Bella Vista Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Norman E. Sewell <a href="http://www.cappsroad.org">www.cappsroad.org</a> 741-9104 or 741-5151	<b>ROGERS, AR</b> Central Church of Christ 201 South 19th St., Ste. N Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Earl Mitchell: (479) 636-7484	<b>FREMONT, CA</b> Centerville Church of Christ 3885 Beacon Ave., Ste D Fremont, CA 94538 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. (510) 794-7659	<b>BROOKSVILLE, FL</b> Church of Christ 604 W. Fort Dade Ave. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: V.C. McCormick (352) 796-9803
<b>FLORENCE, AL</b> College View Church of Christ 851 N. Pine St. (Next to University Campus) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelists: Mark White (256) 766-0403	<b>GLENDALE, AZ</b> Church of Christ 6801 N. 60th Ave. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:40 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Steven Harper	<b>JACKSONVILLE, AR</b> Church of Christ 1807 McArthur Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (501) 982-6413 - church bldg (501) 982-6776 - William Engel <a href="http://www.mcarthurdrccoc.com">www.mcarthurdrccoc.com</a>	<b>TEXARKANA, AR</b> Church of Christ 2301 Franklin Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Marc R. Hinds	<b>LONG BEACH, CA</b> Church of Christ 3433 Studebaker Rd. Bible Study 9:50 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. JP Flores (562) 420-2363 Mark Reeves (562) 420-9577 <a href="http://www.JustChristians.org">www.JustChristians.org</a>	<b>DESTIN, FL</b> South Walton Church of Christ 64 Casting Lake Rd. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (850) 622-3817 <a href="http://www.southwaltonchurchofchrist.com">www.southwaltonchurchofchrist.com</a>
<b>HUNTSVILLE, AL</b> Chapman Acres Church of Christ 2137 Penhall Dr., NE (I-565, Exit 21, right on Maysville Rd., left on Chapman Ave., right on Penhall Dr.) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. <a href="http://www.chapmanacres.org">www.chapmanacres.org</a>	<b>TUCSON, AZ</b> Church of Christ 145 N. Country Club Rd. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Hugh Delong 326-3634 or 722-3179	<b>JONESBORO, AR</b> Stone Street Church of Christ 1607 Stone St Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Dick Blackford (870) 933-9134	<b>ALAMEDA, CA</b> Alameda Church of Christ 2167 Santa Clara Ave. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Call Us! (510) 523-9547 <a href="http://www.alamedacoc.org">www.alamedacoc.org</a>	<b>OCEANSIDE-VISTA, CA</b> Church of Christ 2020 Sunset Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (760) 940-8003	<b>FORT LAUDERDALE, FL</b> Northside Church of Christ 912 NW 19th St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (954) 763-1404
<b>MOBILE, AL</b> West Mobile Church of Christ 129 Hillcrest Rd. Worship 9:00am-9:30am Bible Study 9:30am-10:30am Worship 10:30am-11:30am Wednesday 7:00pm (251) 342-4144 or 342-2041	<b>CONWAY, AR</b> Hwy. 65 Church of Christ 271 Highway 65N Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Bruce Reeves Bldg: (501) 336-0052	<b>LITTLE ROCK, AR</b> Church of Christ 7115 West 65th St. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Don McClain Res. (501) 847-6677 Study (501) 568-1062	<b>BELLFLOWER, CA</b> Rose Ave. Church of Christ 17903 Ibbetson Ave. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (562) 866-5615	<b>LOVELAND, CO</b> Poudre Valley church of Christ 4202 North Garfield Avenue Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Afternoon 1:30 P.M. Evangelist: Richard Thetford (970) 667-0469 <a href="http://www.poudrevalleychurchofchrist.org">www.poudrevalleychurchofchrist.org</a>	<b>FORT MYERS, FL</b> Church of Christ 200 Pine Island Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Vernon E. Ford (239) 567-2170
<b>MONTGOMERY, AL</b> Eastbrook Church of Christ 650 Coliseum Blvd. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Wednesday 6:00 P.M. Bldg: (334) 272-4232 Evangelist: Brian Moore 279-1077 Charles Martin 283-2983	<b>CONWAY, AR</b> Eastside Church of Christ 1540 E. Oak St. 72302 <a href="http://www.conwaychurchofchrist.org">www.conwaychurchofchrist.org</a> <u>Schedule of Services</u> Sun. Bible Classes 9:30 A.M. Sunday Worship 10:30 A.M. Sunday Worship 6:00 P.M. Wed. Bible Classes 7:00 P.M. Preacher - Gary Prince <a href="mailto:gwprince@juno.com">gwprince@juno.com</a>	<b>MARSHALL, AR</b> Marshall Church of Christ (North Central, AR) Hwy. 27 N, 1 Mi. from 65 Jct. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Randy Searight (870) 448-2055	<b>CANOGA PARK, CA</b> (San Fernando Valley) Church of Christ 7054 Winnetka Ave. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Afternoon 2:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Minister: Bruce Evans (818) 795-5566 Spanish congregation (818) 701-0112	<b>MONTROSE, CO</b> San Juan Church of Christ 1414 Hawk Parkway, Unit C Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 2:00 P.M. (970) 249-8116	<b>FORT MYERS, FL</b> Southside Church of Christ 13641 Learning Ct. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: David P. Schmidt 433-2838 or 482-2158
<b>NORTHPORT, AL</b> Northwood Church of Christ 4601 Nrtwood Estates Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: David Maxson	<b>CONWAY, AR</b> Prince Street Church of Christ 2655 Prince St. (Hwy. 60) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (501) 339-6917	<b>PINE BLUFF, AR</b> Church of Christ 4700 W. 28th St. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:35 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Clarence W. Fell (870) 879-2097	<b>DUBLIN, CA</b> Dublin Church of Christ 11873 Dublin Blvd. CA 94568 Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Joshua Higgins (925) 828-8747	<b>MILTON, DE</b> Lighthouse Church of Christ 14574 Coastal Hwy. Rt. 1 Worship 9:30 A.M. Sunday School 10:45 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (302) 644-7379	

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<p><b>FT. WALTON BEACH, FL</b> 6 Lane Dr. Mary Esther, FL Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Joey Rankin (850) 244-9222</p>	<p><b>ORLANDO, FL</b> Azalea Park Church of Christ 6800 Lake Underhill Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: James P. Needham (407) 277-7931 or 628-2995</p>	<p><b>CONYERS, GA</b> Rockdale Church of Christ East Metro Atlanta, 705 Smyrna Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Forrest Bacon, elder (770) 918-1932; Wendell Holland, elder (770) 761-6987; Building (770) 929-3973</p>	<p><b>DOWNS GROVE, IL</b> Church of Christ 1236 63rd St. (1 and 1/2 mile E. of I355) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:55 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (630) 968-0760 • www.dgcoc.org</p>	<p><b>PLAINFIELD, IN</b> Church of Christ West 2028 Stafford Rd., Suite C (Marsh Shopping Center) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:50 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Johnie Edwards (317) 964-9404 or (317) 839-1769 www.churchofchristwest.org</p>	<p><b>GRINNELL, IA</b> Church of Christ 1402 Third Ave. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (641) 521-6485 (641) 236-3883 www.grinnellcoc.com</p>	
<p><b>FROSTPROOF, FL</b> Church of Christ 40 W. "A" St. Frostproof, FL 33483 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (863) 635-2607 or 635-4278</p>	<p><b>ORLANDO, FL</b> S. Bumby Church of Christ 3940 S. Bumby Bible Study 9:55 A.M. Worship 10:55 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Joshua C. Creel (407) 851-8031 or (321) 235-3307</p>	<p><b>PINE MTN. VALLEY, GA</b> Church of Christ Route 116 (near Callaway Gardens) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Tommy W. Thomas (706) 628-5117 or 628-5229</p>	<p><b>GLENN ELLYN, IL</b> Church of Christ 796 Prairie, 60137 Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Joseph T. Novak (630) 529-2149 (630) 858-2290</p>	<p><b>INDIANAPOLIS, IN</b> Castleton Church of Christ 7701 East 86th St., 46256 SUNDAY Worship 9:30 A.M. Bible Study 10:25 A.M. Worship 11:15 A.M. WEDNESDAY Bible Study 7:00 P.M. (317) 710-1204</p>	<p><b>EL DORADO, KS</b> Emporia St. Church of Christ 1154 S. Emporia Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (316) 250-7123</p>	
<p><b>GENEVA, FL</b> Church of Christ Ave. C and 2nd St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. (407) 349-9998</p>	<p><b>PALATKA, FL</b> Palatka Church of Christ 505 Third Ave. (Third Ave. intersects Hwy. 19 one block south of Hwy. 20) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Robert Skomp (386) 326-3952 or 546-5689</p>	<p><b>SAVANNAH, GA</b> Coastal Church of Christ 7201 Johnny Mercer Blvd Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Wednesday 6:30 P.M. Evangelist: Ron Nelson ronaldnelson1@gmail.com (912) 306-4631 www.coastalchurchofchrist.com</p>	<p><b>MATTOON, IL</b> Southside Church of Christ 1100 S. 17th St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (217) 234-3702</p>	<p><b>JAMESTOWN, IN</b> Church of Christ Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:25 A.M. Evening 4:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Greg King (765) 676-6404 or (765) 891-9443 www.jamestowncoc.com</p>	<p><b>TOPEKA, KS</b> 17th Street Church of Christ 5600 SW 17th St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 4:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (785) 235-8687 or 273-7977 www.17thstreetchurchofchrist.org</p>	
<p><b>JACKSONVILLE, FL</b> Marietta Church of Christ 8150 Driggers St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jamie Rhoden (904) 781-5704 or 693-0432 www.mariettacoc.com</p>	<p><b>PALMETTO, FL</b> Palmetto Church of Christ 1575 14th Avenue W. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. www.palmettochurchofchrist.com (941) 722-1307</p>	<p><b>VALDOSTA, GA</b> Gonwood Church of Christ 4030 Mulligan Rd. (4 mi. S. of Moody) Next to Fred's Store on Bemiss Rd. Valdosta, GA 31605 Sunday Bible Class 10 A.M. Sunday Morn. Worship 11 A.M. Sunday Eve. Worship 6 P.M. Wed. Eve. Bible Class 7 P.M. (229) 219-8449 or (229) 300-3739 agospelpreacher@gmail.com</p>	<p><b>PALATINE, IL</b> Church of Christ (N.W. Chicago Suburb) 1050 N. Deer Ave. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (847) 967-9667</p>	<p><b>MARION, IN</b> South Marion Church of Christ 3629 S. Washington St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Alan Jones (765) 922-7602 www.southmarionchurchofchrist.org</p>	<p><b>AUSTIN, KY</b> Peter's Creek Church of Christ 856 Thomerson Park Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening (Nov-Mar) 5:00 P.M. Evening (Apr-Oct) 6:00 P.M. Evangelist: Justin Monts (270) 404-2171 or 646-0498 www.peterscreekcoc.com</p>	
<p><b>KEY LARGO, FL</b> Key Largo Church of Christ 100695 N. Overseas Hwy. 33037 m.m. 100.7 on US 1 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: William LeDent (305) 451-1194</p>	<p><b>PANAMA CITY BEACH, FL</b> Beach Church of Christ 8910 Front Beach Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (850) 234-2521</p>	<p><b>VALDOSTA, GA</b> Church of Christ 4313 North Valdosta Rd. (Located 1 mile E. of Exit 22 off I-75) Worship 9:00 AM Bible Study 10:00 AM Communion 11:00 AM Wednesday 7:00 PM (229) 244-8630 www.northvaldostacoc.com</p>	<p><b>SOUTH HOLLAND, IL</b> Southeast Church of Christ 16224 S Vincennes Ave. Bible Study 9:00 AM Worship 10:00 AM Evening 4:00 PM Wednesday 7:00 PM Evangelist: Donald Hawkins (708) 339-1008 www.southeastchurchofchrist.com</p>	<p><b>OOLITIC, IN</b> Church of Christ 400 Lafayette Ave. P.O. Box 34 Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (812) 279-4332</p>	<p><b>BEAVER DAM, KY</b> Church of Christ 1235 Williams St. Worship 10:00 A.M. Bible Study After Worship Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Mike Thomas (270) 274-4451 or 274-4486</p>	
<p><b>MIAMI, FL</b> Flagler Grove Church of Christ (Nearest to Airport) 500 N.W. 53rd Ave. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: John Buttrick (305) 634-5924</p>	<p><b>AD SPACE AVAILABLE PLACE YOURS TODAY! tmmikewillis@gmail.com</b></p>		<p><b>HI - ISLAND OF OAHU</b> Leeward Church of Christ 94-1233 Waipahu St. Waipahu, HI 96797 (15 mi. from Honolulu; 18 mi. from Waikiki) Bible Study 9 A.M. Worship 10 A.M. Evening 6 P.M. Wednesday 7 P.M. www.leewardchurchofchrist.org Anthony Genton: (808) 671-0239</p>	<p><b>CLARKSVILLE, IN</b> Clarksville Church of Christ 407 W. Lewis &amp; Clark Pkwy. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Kipp Campbell (502) 593-6868 or (812) 944-2305 www.cvcofc.org 948-9917</p>	<p><b>PEKIN, IN</b> Church of Christ (First St. &amp; Karnes Ct.) Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jeremy Goen (812) 967-3437 or 967-3520 www.pekinchurchofchrist.com</p>	<p><b>BRANDENBURG, KY</b> Brandenburg Church of Christ 612 Broadway Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 6:30 P.M. Evangelist: Charles J. White (270) 422-3878</p>
<p><b>MIAMI, FL</b> Church of Christ 12780 Quail Roost Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Clark Pace (305) 233-9590 or (954) 430-1437</p>	<p><b>PENSACOLA, FL</b> East Hill Church of Christ 2078 E. Nine Mile Rd. at Camberrill Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Hal Hammorns (850) 479-2130 and (850) 602-8420</p>	<p><b>BLACKFOOT, ID</b> Church of Christ 370 N. Shilling P.O. Box 158-83221 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 1 1:00 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (208) 785-6168 or 681-1552</p>	<p><b>HELP VACATIONING CHRISTIANS FIND YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP</b></p>		<p><b>SALEM, IN</b> Westside Church of Christ 2000 West State Rd. 56 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Evan Casey (812) 883-2033 www.westsidechurchofchrist.info</p>	<p><b>CAMPBELLSVILLE, KY</b> Sunny Hill Dr. Church of Christ (near the Dairy Queen) AM Worship 9:30 A.M. AM Bible Study 10:30 A.M. AM Worship 11:30 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Steve Lee stevelee4510@windstream.net (270) 789-1651 WWW.SUNNYHILLCCOC.COM</p>
<p><b>OCALA, FL</b> Anthony Church of Christ 9778 N.E. Jacksonville Rd. Anthony, FL 32617 Bible Study 9 A.M. Worship 10 A.M. Wednesday 6:30 P.M. Evangelist: Greg Cruz Phone: (352) 629-5505 www.anthonycoc.com</p>	<p><b>SEFFNER, FL</b> Church of Christ 621 E. Wheeler Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Bobby Witherington (813) 684-1297 www.seffnercoc.org</p>	<p><b>ABINGDON, IL</b> Abingdon Church of Christ 209 N. Main Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evangelist: John B. Wilson (309) 462-5368</p>	<p><b>GREENWOOD, IN</b> Greenwood Church of Christ 371 W. Main St. Sun. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 4:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelists: Dan Barker &amp; Steve Niemeier (317) 888-8288 www.churchofchristatgreenwood.org</p>	<p><b>TRAFALGAR, IN</b> Spearsville Rd. Church of Christ Christ, 6244 S. 500W. (1.2 mi. S. of Hwy. 135) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Ed Rangel (317) 878-5969 www.trafalgarchurch.com</p>	<p><b>CANEYVILLE, KY</b> Caneyville Church of Christ 103 N. Main St. • P.O. Box 233 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jarrod Jacobs (270) 589-4167, (270) 274-3065 or (502) 724-2231</p>	
<p><b>ORLANDO, FL</b> Pine Hills Church of Christ 890 Hastings St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Ray West (407) 293-2851 or 290-8650</p>	<p><b>CENTERVILLE, GA</b> Centerville Church of Christ 250 Collins Ave. (Near Robins AFB) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: J. Wiley Adams (478) 922-1158</p>	<p><b>CHICAGO, IL</b> Church of Christ 1514 West 74th Street Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: James E. Scott Bldg. (773) 224-9279 (708) 339-6126</p>	<p><b>HOBART, IN</b> Church of Christ 300 N. Liberty St. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jerry Cleek (219) 942-2663</p>	<p><b>DES MOINES, IA</b> Church of Christ 1310 N.E. 54th Ave. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:40 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (515) 262-6799</p>	<p><b>DANVILLE, KY</b> 385 E. Lexington Ave. Worship 10:00 A.M. Bible Study 11:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Scott Vifquain (859) 236-4204</p>	





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Westside Church of Christ  
2320 Imperial Dr.  
(closest to DFW Airport)  
Bible Study 9:00 A.M.  
Worship 9:50 A.M.  
Evening 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Mark Roberts  
(972) 986-9131  
www.JustChristians.com

**PLANO, TX**  
(North Dallas Suburb)  
Spring Creek Church of Christ  
2100 W. Spring Creek Pkwy.  
Bible Study 9:00 A.M.  
Worship 10:00 A.M.  
Evening 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
(972) 517-5582  
www.planochurch.org

**DALLAS, TX**  
Methodist Street Church of Christ  
211 Methodist St. • Red Oak TX, 75154  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.  
(972) 576-3119 or 363-7672  
www.methodiststreetchurchofchrist.com  
Evangelist: D. LeRoy Klice

**LANCASTER, TX**  
Pleasant Run Church of Christ  
831 W. Pleasant Run Rd.  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:20 A.M.  
Evening 5:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
(972) 227-1708 or 227-2598

**LUBBOCK, TX**  
Indiana Ave. Church of Christ  
6111 Indiana Ave.  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.  
(806) 795-3377

**LUFKIN, TX**  
Timberland Dr. Church of Christ  
912 S. Timberland Dr.  
Bible Study 9:00 A.M.  
Worship 9:50 A.M.  
Evening 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.  
Evangelists: Harold Hancock  
Reagan McClenny  
634-7110 or 632-7070

**MANSFIELD, TX**  
Northside Church of Christ  
1820 Mansfield-Webb Road  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:20 A.M.  
Evening 5:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 6:30 P.M.  
Evangelists: Tom Roberts  
(817) 466-3160

**MESQUITE, TX**  
(East Dallas)  
Westlake Church of Christ  
427 Gross Rd., 75149  
Bible Study 9:00 A.M.  
Worship 10:00 A.M.  
Evening 5:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Ashley Sharkey  
(972) 285-1610

**MIDLAND, TX**  
Woodcrest Drive Church of Christ  
1401 Woodcrest Drive  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 4:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.  
Evangelist: Jay Martin  
(432) 689-0955 or  
(432) 620-0762

**NACOGDOCHES, TX**  
Stallings Dr. Church of Christ  
3831 N.E. Stallings Dr.  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:20 A.M.  
Evening 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.  
Evangelists: Randy Harshbarger  
& Jay Taylor

**THE WOODLANDS, TX**  
Woodlands Church of Christ  
P.O. Box 7664-77380  
3987 Wellman Road  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:15 A.M.  
Evening 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
(281) 367-2099  
WWW.SIMPLYCHRISTIANS.NET

**CHESAPEAKE, VA**  
Tidewater Church of Christ  
217 Taxus St.  
Bible Study 10:00 A.M.  
Worship 11:00 A.M.  
Evening 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.  
Evangelist: Steve Schlosser  
(757) 436-6900

**CHESTER, VA**  
Chester Church of Christ  
12100 Winfree St.  
(Central to Richmond, Hopewell,  
Petersburg, & Colonial Heights)  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 5:30 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Church Building: (804) 796-2374  
(804) 385-2725 or (804) 271-0877

**NEWPORT NEWS, VA**  
Harpersville Rd. Church of Christ  
315 Harpersville Rd.  
Bible Study 10:00 A.M.  
Worship 11:00 A.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
  
(757) 595-9564

**RICHMOND (Metro), VA**  
Courthouse Church of Christ  
Courthouse Rd. at Double Creek Ct.  
(2.2 miles S of Rt. 288)  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.  
Evangelist: Gene Tope  
(804) 790-1629  
www.courthousechurchofchrist.com

**RICHMOND, VA**  
Forest Hill Church of Christ  
1208 W. 41st St.  
Bible Study 10:00 A.M.  
Worship 11:00 A.M.  
Evening 6:30 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Jack Bise, Jr.  
(804) 233-5959

**RICHMOND, VA**  
West End  
4909 Patterson Ave.  
Bible Study 10:00 A.M.  
Worship 11:00 A.M.  
Evening 4:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Stacy Crim  
(804) 358-7933

**RIDGEWAY, VA**  
Church of Christ  
2970 Old Leaksville Rd.  
Bible Study 10:00 A.M.  
Worship 11:00 A.M.  
Evening 6:30 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.  
Evangelist: Robert Byrd  
(276) 956-6049

**ROANOKE, VA**  
Blue Ridge Church of Christ  
929 Indiana Ave. N.E.  
(5 min. from Roanoke Convention Center)  
1st Lesson 9:15 A.M.  
Bible Study 10:00 A.M.  
Worship 11:00 A.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
(540) 344-2755

**VIRGINIA BEACH, VA**  
Southside Church of Christ  
5652 Haden Rd.  
Bible Study 10:00 A.M.  
Worship 11:00 A.M.  
  
Robert Mallard  
(757) 464-4574

**BELLINGHAM, WA**  
Mt. Baker Church of Christ  
1860 Mt. Baker Hwy.  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.  
Evangelist: Joe Price  
(360) 752-2692 or 380-2960  
www.bibleanswer.com/mtbaker

**CHARLESTON, WV**  
Church of Christ  
522 Daugherty St.  
Bible Study 10:00 A.M.  
Worship 10:50 A.M.  
Evening 5:30 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Kent Clark: (304) 342-0237  
mansuper1965@hotmail.com

**CHARLESTON, WV**  
Church of Christ  
873 Oakwood Rd.  
Bible Study 10:00 A.M.  
Worship 10:50 A.M.  
Evening 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Jonathan Chaffin  
(304) 342-5637  
www.oakwoodchurchofchrist.com

**CLARKSBURG, WV**  
Westside Church of Christ  
Davisson Run Road  
  
Sunday Morning 9:30 A.M.  
  
(304) 622-5433

**FAIRMONT, WV**  
Eastside Church of Christ  
1929 Morgantown Ave.  
Bible Study 10:00 A.M.  
Worship 10:45 A.M.  
Evening 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.  
(304) 363-8696 (304) 842-7936

**GLADESVILLE, WV**  
Gladesville Church of Christ  
2906 Gladesville Rd.  
Independence, WV 26374  
Sunday Bible Study 10:00 A.M.  
Worship 10:45 A.M.  
Sunday 7:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.  
(304) 864-3078

**MOUNDSVILLE, WV**  
Church of Christ  
210 Cedar St.  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Evening 6:30 P.M.  
Mid-week 7:30 P.M.  
Evangelist: Devin Roush  
(304) 845-2820, 845-4940

**PARKERSBURG, WV**  
Martrtown Church of Christ  
825 Martrtown Road  
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.  
Worship 10:15 A.M.  
Evening 7:00 P.M.  
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
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**THEME: Recapturing the Spirit and Power of The Golden Age of Preaching**

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:00 AM		Substance Matters <i>Bill Hall</i>	Character Counts <i>Phil Chumbley</i>	Methods Make A Difference <i>Bobby Graham</i>	
9:00 AM		Jesus' Method & Message: Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) <i>Greg Litmer</i>	Jesus' Method & Message: Sermon to the Scribes & Pharisees (Matt. 23) <i>Karl Diestelkamp</i>	Jesus' Method & Message: Jesus' Departure Sermon (John 14-17) <i>Curtis Pope</i>	
10:00 AM		Peter's Method & Message: Pentecost Sermon (Acts 2) <i>Mike Thomas</i>	Peter's Method & Message: Temple Gate Sermon (Acts 3-4) <i>John Gentry</i>	Peter's Method & Message: Sermon to Cornelius (Acts 10-11) <i>David Diestelkamp</i>	
11:00 AM	Women's Track:	What To Expect From Preaching: Being Taught and Spiritually Fed: <i>Phyllis Bagwell</i>	What To Expect from Preaching: Being Admonished, Reproved, and Rebuked <i>Jennifer Maxey</i>	What To Expect from Preaching: Being Encouraged <i>Vicky Litmer</i>	
11:00 AM	Children's Track:	Bible Story Time	Bible Story Time	Bible Story Time	
11:00 AM	Men's Track:	John The Baptist's Preaching Style <i>Lonnice Oldag</i>	Stephen's Sermon (Acts 7) <i>Ron Chaffin</i>	Paul's Sermon at Mars Hill (Acts 17) <i>David Maxson</i>	
2:00 PM			Open Forum: Sixty Years of Gospel Preaching <i>Connie W. Adams and Sewell Hall</i>		
7:00 PM	Singing	Singing	No Singing	Singing	Singing
7:30 PM	Characteristics of Today's Preaching <i>Connie W. Adams</i>	Then & Now: Recapturing the Prophetic Spirit <i>Sewell Hall</i>	No Lecture	Recapturing the Spirit of Jesus & the Apostles <i>Daniel King</i>	