

Understanding Divine Providence

Sunday PM 11/17/19

Introduction:

What control does God exercise in our lives? A great question. God did this! Or, God did this? Do we see God working in our lives or is He passive in our lives? Providence - foresight or plan to accomplish a desired end, has to do with God working in the affairs of men.

I) Misconceptions Confuse the Issue

A) Providence limited to Israel

1. *Amos 9.7-8* moved Philistines and Arameans.
2. *Jonah 4.11* God had compassion on 120,000 Ninevites.
3. *Genesis 14.18* glorified in the Egyptians.
4. *Genesis 15.15* God's plan was to not take the land from the Amorites at that time.
5. In each case God used these nations to accomplish His purpose, plan.

B) Providence limited to miracles - if so, then one either has to affirm miraculous abilities today or deny providential events.

1. *Genesis 45.5-8* no law of nature violated but Joseph going to Egypt was for God's plan.
2. *Romans 15.30-32* Paul being taken to Rome was for the purpose of preaching the Gospel to the highest authorities in Rome.

3. God can use natural means, events, people, to accomplish His plan.

C) Everything is providential

1. If I stub my big toe, run a traffic light, get sick, etc.
2. There are things that happen by time and chance, *Ecclesiastes 9.11*
3. As Christians there are events we can learn from and use for good, God's purpose.

II) Fact - is God is in Control

A) Old Testament says to have faith, God is in control

1. We are in the hands of God, *Ecclesiastes 8.16-9.1*
2. We cannot change what God does, *Ecclesiastes 7.13-14*
3. We cannot know God's workings, *Ecclesiastes 3.11*
4. Even historic repetition is God's hand, *Ecclesiastes 3.15*

B) Specifically, the Messiah was prophesied to rule.

1. *Psalms 2.7-9* His rule is described, *Psalms 110.1-2* the rule of Christ over His enemies, *Isaiah 11.3-5ff*
2. In the birth of Christ we can see some miraculous events and some non-miraculous events (the taxation which caused Joseph and Mary to be in Bethlehem) but in all of it we see the working of God.

C) N.T. says Jesus Christ in control

1. *Matthew 28.18* all authority in heaven and earth, leaves no place out.
2. *1 Peter 3.22* no government is beyond His control
3. *Revelation 1.5* no President, Emperor, King, or headship over Him.
4. Remember the key is "foresight or plan to accomplish a desired end".

III) God Has Always Used Providential Foresight

A) In all the earth, all the people, especially for His people

1. Man, you and I, cannot always see what God is doing.
2. *Hebrews 1.13-14* He has legions of powerful servants.
3. *Hebrews 13.5-6* we have the promise of His help.

B) With divine assurance He still ask for faith

1. *Hebrews 11.6* will you be content with that?

Conclusion:

Esther 4.14 you may be God's providence working in the lives of others. The salt and light to show them the way to God. The influence for good in your family, with your friends. The one to help those in need.