

Divine Providence (Part 1)

Genesis 22:8

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God's Providence Does Exist

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

- ▶ *Ecclesiastes 9:1* "For all this I laid to my heart, even to explore all this: that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God."
- ▶ *Ecclesiastes 3:11* "Man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end."

2

Two Dangerous Extremes

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

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Plan Of Study:

- ▶ What is Providence?
- ▶ Distinct from miracles.
- ▶ General Providence: God working in nature.
- ▶ Specific Providence: God working in individual lives. (Joseph, Esther, Paul, etc.)
- ▶ Providence and free will.
- ▶ Providence and prayer.

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What Is Providence?

- ▶ Creation refers to that singular activity by which in the beginning God brought the universe into existence ...
- ▶ Providence is a general concept that refers to the broad scope of God's continuing activity in relation to the on-going world.

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What Is Providence?

- ▶ "Divine guidance or care. God conceived as the power sustaining and guiding human destiny."
(Webster)
- ▶ Providence is the working of God through His provision in the natural and spiritual realms, yet it is a control that violates neither the sovereignty of the human will nor the divine natural and spiritual laws.

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What Is Providence?

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

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

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What Is Providence?

pronoia (pron'-oy-ah)

“to know ahead. Providence, care, prudence (Acts 24:2), provision (Rom 13:14).” (The Complete Word Study Dictionary)

- ▶ Verb form found three times.

Romans 12:7

2 Corinthians 8:21

1 Timothy 5:8

- ▶ ***prolepoo*** (prob-lep'-o)

“to foresee; to provide: Hebrews 11:32–40”

(Thayer)

- “- literally means to “see ahead.”

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What Is Providence?

- ▶ Primarily refers to “***looking ahead***.”
 - Planning
 - Forethought
 - Making necessary preparations and arrangements
 - Foresight

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What Is Providence?

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

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Is God Active Or Absent In The World He Has Created?

- ▶ God’s providential relation to the physical world as its divine CREATOR and PRESERVER, and to the moral world as its governor, are clearly set forth. (Nehemiah 9:6,19–20; Colossians 1:15–17 and Hebrews 12:9)

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Is God Active Or Absent In The World He Has Created?

- ▶ **We are taught to pray, “give us this day our daily bread”**(Matthew 6:9–15; cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12; 2 Thessalonians 3:6–12)

Is God able to bless the work of our hands to supply bread? Matthew 6 in context.

NOTE: Matthew 6:33; Philippians 4:6, 19; cf. 1 Peter 5:6–7.

- The birds of the heaven.
- Can you by worrying add to your life?
- Consider the lilies ...

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Is God Active Or Absent In The World He Has Created?

- ▶ We are taught to pray for *“Kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life...”* (1 Timothy 2:2).
 - Does God have any active hand in the affairs of men to answer this prayer?
- ▶ We are taught to pray, *“And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”* (Matthew 6:13)
 - cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Timothy 4:17-18; Philemon 22

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Is God Active Or Absent In The World He Has Created?

- GOD IS ACTIVE:** Evident by the many scriptures regarding PRAYER. (1 John 3:22; 5:14-15)
- ▶ Prayer would be useless if God does not hear and also answer prayers *“asked in faith”* according to HIS will.

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Is God Active Or Absent In The World He Has Created?

- ▶ Christians can pray and expect God to give answer to our petitions by his WILL. (1 Corinthians 4:19; James 4:13-16; Ephesians 3:20-21)
- ▶ God is NOT totally removed and disinterested in the events of our lives. (1 Peter 5:6)
 - Romans 15:30ff - Paul's request for the prayers of brethren that he would be delivered from wicked men.
 - Acts 21:31-35 - Answer to this prayer through natural means ... providence.

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Facts to Keep in Mind

- ▶ God is able to use men, whether they are good or evil, right or wrong, to accomplish His eternal purpose. This is the sum of God's providence.
- ▶ God never intervenes or interferes with man's free will.

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