

God's Providence

TEXT: Heb. 11:6

INTRODUCTION:

- A. FAITH IS AN ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION (**Mark 16:16**).
- B. AN ODD REMINDER TO BEGIN A SERMON ON PROVIDENCE.
 - 1. What is faith?
 - a. Belief that **HE** is.
 - b. And that **he is the rewarder** è **trust** in his word.
- C. A STUDY OF PROVIDENCE IS AN EXAMINATION OF OUR TRUST.

I. WHAT IS PROVIDENCE?

- A. DEFINITIONS:
 - 1. Derived from “**provide**” which means “etymologically ‘**to foresee**’ – **ISBE**.”
 - 2. Greek, **pronoia**, means "forethought"- **ibid**.
 - 3. Found only in **Acts 24:2** and **Rom. 13:14**, and neither refers to “God’s providence.”
 - 4. Insight gained by looking at the verb form – **pronoeo** in **1 Tim 5:8; Rom 12:17; 2 Cor 8:21** (A. T. Robertson).
 - 5. Apparently came understood not only as “foresee,” but “make provision.” – **Vine**.
- B. GOD’S PROVIDENCE IS WHAT HE PROVIDES FOR US IN HIS WISDOM AND FORSIGHT.

II. GOD’S PROMISE OF HIS PROVIDENTIAL CARE.

- A. GOD KNOWS AND CARES (**Matt. 6:25-33**).
- B. WE ARE VALUABLE TO HIM (**Matt. 10:29-31; Rom. 8:31-32**).
- C. PRAYER PLAYS A ROLE (**Matt. 7:7-11; Jas. 5:15**).
- D. THE QUESTION: DO WE TRUST GOD IN THESE MATTERS.

III. FALSE CONCEPTS OF PROVIDENCE.

- A. **NATURE ONLY** – God created the world and left it to itself. If this is so, **why pray?**
- B. **HISTORY ONLY** – God involved in men’s lives in the past, but not today (**1 Pet. 5:6-7**).
- C. **MAJOR MATTERS ONLY** – Only cares for important things in life, not concerned with daily lives (**Matt. 10:29-31**).
- D. **OCCASIONAL FAVORS ONLY** – Every now and then (**Jas. 1:17**).
- E. **SALVATION MATTERS ONLY** – Only involved in salvation matters, He leaves everything else for us to manage (**1 Thess. 5:16-18**).

IV. ALTERNATIVES TO PROVIDENCE.

- A. **CHANCE** (**Ecc. 9:11-12**). Some things are a matter of chance, but all things are governed by God’s law.
- B. **HUMANISM**.
 - 1. “We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.”
 - 2. **Jer. 10:23; Prov. 16:25**.
- C. **DEISM**: The cosmos is like a wind up toy that God has wound up and stepped back from. He never intervenes. He merely waits for it to run down. Jesus in the flesh and the existence of the Bible argue against such.
- D. **NON-THEISTIC FATE**. Many Eastern religions believe fate controls life. What happens

was determined to happen by fate or destiny.

- E. **THEISTIC FATE.** Calvinists and Moslems believe that God has scripted everything that will take place, and all that we do, we do because God has determined we will do it.

When it's your time...

1. But the Bible teaches that man has choice (**Josh. 24:15**).
2. Fate makes God responsible for evil as well as good (**Jas. 1:13-18**).
3. The Fatalist makes every act of nature an intentional act of God, when in fact nature operates independently within the bounds God has set for it (**Job 38:8-11**).

V. HOW DOES GOD PROVIDE FOR US?

- A. GOD USES NATURAL LAW (**Psa. 104:14; 135:5-7; Acts 14:17; Matt. 5:45**).
- B. HE HAS LAW THAT RULES SOCIETIES (**Job 12:23; Dan 2:21**).
- C. HE GAVE US THE BIBLE (**Psa. 119:105; Prov. 2:6**).
- D. HIS SERVANTS WORK (**Phil. 2:12-13**).
- E. DON'T EXPECT A MIRACLE – FOR GOD TO SUSPEND HIS LAW FOR YOU.

VI. WHAT DOES HE DO?

- A. WE KNOW HOW GOD PROVIDES SUSTENANCE (**Acts 14:17; Eph. 4:28**).
- B. WE KNOW HOW HE PROVIDES SALVATION.
 1. The Power of salvation (**Rom. 1:16**).
 2. The Great Commission (**Mark 16:15-16**).
 3. Philip and the Eunuch, Peter and Cornelius were special not repeated events.
 4. Your conversion a part of God's revealed design.
 5. Was there any special help? Any special answer to prayer? (**Col. 4:3-4**).
- C. WISDOM FOR OUR DAILY WALK?
 1. Wisdom is found throughout the Scripture.
 2. The selection of a mate (**2 Cor 6:14**). The Bible talks about a worthy woman and man. Did God choose your mate by himself? Did he shove you together? Or did he lay forth in the word instruction for us to follow? Why not the perfect wife for all?
 3. ie. Alcohol (**Prov. 20:1; 31:4-6**).
 4. Temptation of any sort (**Jas. 4:7; 1 Thess. 5:21-22**).

DOES GOD DO ANYTHING ELSE?

VII. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PRAYER?

- A. ASK ! (**Matt. 7:7-8**). GOD IS OUR FATHER.
- B. WHEN THERE SEEMS NO OTHER PLACE TO GO (**Phil 4:4-6**).
- C. WHEN WE ARE IN NEED.
 1. Of Wisdom (**James 1:5**) and Strength (**Eph. 6:18-20**)
 2. Of healing (**James 5:14-15**) and forgiveness (**James 5:15; Acts 8:23**).
- D. GOD'S PROMISE TO HEAR (**1 John 5:14-15; 1 Pet. 3:12**).
- E. BUT WE MUST ASK IN FAITH (**James 1:5-8**).
- F. GOD'S PROMISE & PROOF (**James 5:16-18**).
- G. GOD HEARS, BUT SOMETIMES DOESN'T SEEM TO ANSWER (**Luke 18:1**). SOMETIMES THE OPPOSITE FROM WHAT WE PRAY HAPPENS.
 1. After all, He has invested much in our welfare (**Rom. 8:31-32**).
 2. He is so far ahead of us in wisdom (**Isa. 55:8-9**).
 3. **Prov. 3:5**. If my "trust in the Lord" is limited to those times when God's wisdom matches mine, am I not leaning on my own understanding? (**Job 13:15**).
 4. It is not right to think that God's answer will always be YES, as the example of Paul and Jesus illustrate (**2 Cor. 12:7-10; Matt. 26:39; 27:50**).

5. What if I ask for a stone or a serpent? (**Matt. 7:9-10**).
- H. WE MUST HAVE ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE IN THE GOODNESS OF GOD AND HIS GREATER WISDOM.

FAITH

- J. GOD KNOWS AND PROVIDES BEFORE WE PRAY (**Matt. 6:8, 31-32**).

VIII. HOW WILL UNDERSTANDING THIS EFFECT MY PRAYERS?

- A. I WILL HAVE GREATER CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER (**Matt. 7:7-11**).
- B. PRAYER WILL FOCUS ON SEEKING GOD'S KINGDOM (**Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:1-2**).
- C. I WILL LEARN THE IMPORTANCE OF SUBMISSION.
1. What did Jesus pray? (**Matt. 26:39**).
 2. What did Jesus teach us to pray? (**Matt. 6:10**).
 3. We often don't know what that will be? (**2 Sam. 12:22**).
 - a. We know what God wants us to do (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**).
 - b. We often don't know what God is going to do with us.
4. The foundation principle of our behavior (**James 4:13-17**).

IX. THE OUTCOME OF PROVIDENCE.

- A. GOD'S CARE IN THIS LIFE (**Psa. 37:25**).
- B. HEAVEN (**Rom. 8:28**).

CONCLUSION:

- A. FAITH LEADS US TO UNDERSTAND THAT GOD IS ALIVE AND AT WORK IN OUR LIVES.
- B. SOME THINGS THAT GOD DOES ARE APPARENT AND REVEALED TO US.
- C. SOME THINGS ARE NOT (**Deut. 29:29**).