

Divine Providence

(Part 9)
Conclusion

God's Providence Does Exist

- ▶ "Man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end." (Ecclesiastes 3:11)
- ▶ Therefore as we "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7), we "Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, And lean not upon thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he will direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

What Is Providence?

- ▶ Providence is a general concept that refers to the broad scope of God's continuing activity in relation to the on-going world.
- ▶ The providence of God generally means, the divine care, guidance, and sustaining power of God over the universe and the affairs of men, and spiritual realms, yet it is a control that violates neither the sovereignty of the human will nor the divine natural and spiritual laws.

Divine Providence

- ▶ Seen in many lives.
- ▶ Generally. **Matthew 5:45**
- ▶ Specifically:
 - Joseph
 - Esther
 - Job
 - Paul
- ▶ The Problem Of Evil.

Five Realms Where God's Providence Is Seen:

That Which God Permits.

- ▶ 1 Corinthians 16:7 "For I do not wish to see you now by the way; for I hope to tarry a while with you, **if the Lord permit.**"
- ▶ James 4:15 "For that ye ought to say, **if the Lord will**, we shall both live, and do this or that."
- ▶ Acts 14:15-16 "and saying, *Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who in the generations gone by **suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways.***"
- ▶ Hebrews 6:3 "And this will we do, **if God permit.**"

Five Realms Where God's Providence Is Seen:

That Which God Performs.

- i.e. He makes certain thing happen, performing certain actions.
- Matthew 5:45 "for he **maketh** his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and **sendeth** rain on the just and the unjust."*
- Acts 17:25 "neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself **giveth** to all life, and breath, and all things"*

Five Realms Where God's Providence Is Seen:

That Which God Prefers.

1 Timothy 2:4 *"who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."*

2 Peter 3:9 *He desires all men to repent*

Matthew 18:14 *He prefers that no one perish*

7

Five Realms Where God's Providence Is Seen:

That Which God Provides.

▶ God responds to prayer:

- 1 John 5:13-15 *"And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him."*

◦ NOTE: James 1:5, 17

8

Five Realms Where God's Providence Is Seen:

That Which God Prohibits.

1 Corinthians 10:13 *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it."*

NOTE: Job

9

Five Realms Where God's Providence Is Seen:

What do we know?

- ▶ God **permits** certain things.
 - ▶ God **performs** certain acts.
 - ▶ God **prefers** certain things.
 - ▶ God **provides** for us in response to our prayers.
 - ▶ God **prohibits** certain things.
- ▶ **These clearly establish the fact of God's providence!**

10

Application And Difficulty

What do we know?

- God answers prayer, even though I may not know exactly how He does it.
 - God has the ability to use various influences, circumstances and people for my good.
 - He has the ability to work among nations.
 - He can use weather, illness, and even wicked behavior for His own purposes.
- ▶ **HOWEVER** - When it comes to exactly and specifically what God causes, controls, permits or provides, I am not capable of knowing all about that.

11

Application And Difficulty

- ▶ I **CANNOT** interpret the details of God's providence from day to day and event to event.
 - ▶ Illustration: A storm that wipes out a whole community, killing several citizens.
 - Did God cause that, or just permit it?
 - If God caused it directly, why? What did He have in mind?
 - Was this just an indirect consequence of living in a world corrupted by sin?
- **I cannot answer these questions!**

12

God's Providence Does Exist

- ▶ *"Man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end." (Ecclesiastes 3:11)*
- ▶ Therefore as we *"walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Corinthians 5:7), we *"Trust in Jehovah with al thy heart, And lean not upon thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he will direct thy paths."* (Proverbs 3:5-6)

13

Application And Difficulty

What do I need to know?

- ▶ I need to know God and my duty to Him.
- ▶ I need to know my Savior and how to respond to and honor him.

14

Conclusion:

Let us never be ashamed to proclaim the fact of God's providence.

- ▶ Warning:
 - Let us be careful of what we affirm, claim, or attribute to God.
 - *Ecclesiastes 5:2 "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."*
 - *Job 38:2 "Who is this that darkeneth counsel By words without knowledge?"*

15