

The Providence Of God

God is the creator of the world and all that is in it (**Genesis 1-2**). God is able to declare the end from the beginning (**Isaiah 46:10**). He planned man's redemption from sin before the foundation of the world (**Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:17-21**). In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son to be born of a woman, born under the law (**Galatians 4:4**).

Down through human history we see the providence (preparation, care, and supervision) of God at work. He told Abraham to leave his people and that He would make of him a great nation (**Genesis 12:2**). God would tell the Israelites that He had given them the land of Canaan (**Numbers 33:53**). Involved in this was the punishing of the people that were in the land (**Deuteronomy 9:5**).

God raised Pharaoh to the throne for God's purpose of showing His power over all the nations (**Exodus 9:16**). God's providence is seen in the affairs of men in general (**Job 12:23; Daniel 2:21**). There is no authority except from God (**Romans 13:1**).

God chose Gideon to deliver his people from the Midianites (**Judges 6:16-17**). Gideon at the first did not believe because he had his own opinion of what was happening. When Elisha's servant was concerned about what was going on, Elisha asked the Lord to open his eyes that he may see (what God had already provided) (**2 Kings 6:17**).

Satan has tremendous power, but he is also limited by God. At first, Satan could touch everything that Job had, except for Job himself (**Job 1:12**). The second time, Satan could touch his body but could not take his life (**Job 2:4-6**). We are told to resist the devil and he will flee from us (**James 4:7**).

We are reminded that God will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able (**1 Corinthians 10:13**). God Himself has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us (**Hebrews 13:5-6**). Indeed, are we not more valuable than the birds of the air (**Matthew 6:25-34**). We are able to come to the throne of grace to receive help in our time of need (**Hebrews 4:15-16**).

We continue to see the providence of God unfolding as we move into the New Testament. As Peter preached that first Gospel sermon he referred to the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah (**Acts 2:16-36**). Christ suffered once for our sins (**1 Peter 3:18-22**). When we understand that, what shall we do (**Acts 2:37-38; 8:34-38**). Today is the day of salvation (**2 Corinthians 6:1-2**).

We are reminded that there is a time for everything (**Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**). There is a time to die (**Ecclesiastes 3:2; Hebrews 9:27**). The days of our life may be 70 or by reason of strength 80 years (**Psalms 90:10**). Hezekiah was told to put his house in order because he was going to die (**2 Kings 20:1**). However, Hezekiah prayed to the Lord and his life was extended for 15 years (**2 Kings 20:6**). We are also reminded not to be foolish and die before the time (**Ecclesiastes 7:17**).

There is free will of man that is involved. Joshua told the people of his day, "Choose this day" (**Joshua 24:15**). The hand of the Lord is not so short that He cannot reach us or the ear of the Lord so dull that He cannot hear us. Our sins and iniquities have separated us from God (**Isaiah 59:1-2**). The Lord's desire is that we would turn and live (**Ezekiel 18:30-32**). Unless we repent, we will die in our sins (**John 8:24**). The Lord is not willing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance (**2 Peter 3:9**).

Something to think about!

David B. McElwain