

**Intro**

~ The idea of God's providence is his sovereign rule, reign and control over the affairs of men. It's his involvement in the affairs of man and creation. It speaks of his providing for the future to glorify himself

~ The Baker Encyclopedia says God's providence is God's activity throughout history in providing for the needs of human beings, especially those who follow him in faith.

~ Henry Theissen in his Lectures to his Students said, "The sovereign control God exercises is called providence."

~ Theissen continues... Etymologically the word "providence" means foreseeing. From this basic idea has developed the meaning of providing for the future. Theologically the word "providence" Means that continuance activity of God whereby he makes all the events of the physical, mental, and moral realms work out his purpose, and this purpose is nothing short of the original design of creation. To be sure, evil has entered the universe, but it is not allowed to thwart God's original, benevolent, wise and holy purpose."

~ LS Chafer in his systematic Theology said, "Providence...suggests the directing care of God over all things animate and inanimate – embracing things both good and evil – especially over those who are yielded to His will

~ Chafer goes on..."Providence is the divine outworking of all decrees, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory. He directs all things perfectly, no doubt, et without compelling the human will."

~ God works in man the desire to do his will (Phil 2:13)

~ Acts 24:2 in the KJV is the only mention of this word but the idea is clearly there.

~ We mentally know God is in control by sometimes I live like he isn't. And it's demonstrated by my lack of trust in him, by the way I try to control life, circumstances and people

~ God's providence demonstrates his active involvement in the affairs of our lives. This doctrine is full of comfort

**Examples of God's Providence**

1 Ps 37:23 The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord

2 Abraham's Servant (Gen 24:14,27,48) God prepared and ordained the servant's journey to find a wife for Isaac

3 Joseph (Gen 37-50) What seemed like a tragedy to Joseph in being sold as a slave by his brothers was permitted by God to place him in Egypt to be prepared to be promoted by God. Joseph said you sold me but God sent me

4 Moses (Ex 1,2) He was placed in a basket and placed in the water to be discovered by Pharaoh's daughter. His family would be compensated to raise him, he would be raised in Pharaoh's house to be trained and prepared to lead Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land

5 The two spies (Josh 2,6) Two spies enter Jericho and end up the door of Rahab (the only believer) in Jericho

6 Ruth (Ruth 2:3) Ruth goes to glean to provide food for her and Naomi. She happens to go to Boaz's field that's in a position to redeem Naomi and Ruth

7 Judah return from captivity (Ezra 1,6) God stirs up the heart of King Cyrus to send Jews back to Jerusalem. In Ezra 6 King Darius send Ezra back to Jerusalem and also materials to rebuild the house of God

8 Nehemiah (Neh 1,2) God ordained Nehemiah to be a cupbearer to the king. When God moves Nehemiah's heart to lead a building project back in Jerusalem the king gives him permission and gives him materials needed to rebuild the walls. No doubt skills needed to implement this rebuilding project would've been things he learned as the king's cupbearer

9 Esther (Esther) When Esther was chosen to be part of a beauty contest it no doubt seemed like a road to nowhere. Yet, she becomes the queen and is used by God to intercede for her people while Haman wants to destroy all the Jews. Mordecai told her she was called for such a time as this

10 Mordecai (Esther 6) He did a good deed in preventing a plot to kill the king. This deed seemed to be forgotten but one night when the king can't sleep he has the records read and decides to honor Mordecai and Haman who wanted to kill the Jews is humiliated

**Body**

This God whose providence we see in the OT is also the God of the NT and grace age in which we live.

~ We've been discussing faith Hebrews 11 on Wednesday nights.

~ In Acts 4 we see the providence of God at work Planning, Permitting, Proving, Protecting and Providing

- Planning – God planned for Christ's crucifixion
- Permitting – God permitted his Son's death and the apostles being jailed
- Proving – God proved the hearts of Israel and the apostles
- Protecting – God protected Christ until "his hour" of crucifixion and protected the apostles
- Providing – God provided boldness for the apostles to continue to preach and salvation for us thru JC

~ Faith looks beyond current circumstances and sees the providence of God at work:

1 Planning – The father planned for creation, the incarnation, the crucifixion and redemption.

~ Back in Gen 3:15 we see the Fathers plan (protoevangelium) to deal with sin in the human race

~ Acts 2:23 Jesus was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Though there was free will

~ Acts 4:27,28

~ God is actively planning our lives as well. He's planned that we should walk in good works (Eph2:8-10)

~ *Eph 2:8-10 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

~ Paul then admonishes the Ephesian believers to walk worthy of their calling

~ God has planned for us to do good works and the closer we walk in dependence on the Lord we walk worthily in those good works God has planned

~ Rom 8:28-30 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

~ Ps 37:23 The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord

2 Permitting – God gives the OK to all that happens in our lives. It doesn't take him by surprise. God permits evil and the exercise of free will.

~ Acts 2:23, Grace NT Commentary "The Father had permitted the death of the Son in His sovereign purposes. Historically, however, they—without coercion and of their own accord—carried out the whole sequence of murderous violence against the Messiah."

Grace New Testament Commentary, The: Based on the New King James Version.

~ *Acts 14:16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.* God has suffered (allowed & permitted) all nations to walk their own ways.

~ In the course of people with free will there will be the misuse of free to do wrong, sin, hurt others, make bad choices, walk away from God and even hurt and attack those who want to live godly. Paul warned that those who want to live godly will suffer persecution (2 Tim 3:12). That's because God permits those with free will who are ungodly to make choices that affect those who want to live godly.

~ God will permit this evil because it's a means of proving and testing God's children. It has a purifying effect on God's people

~ God permitted peoples rejection of Christ and thereby planned to incorporate that into redemption

~ So when God permits evil, suffering, in our lives we must remember that faith looks beyond current circumstances and see God's providence at work

3 Proving – God plans and permits for tests to come into our lives to purify his people. God often allows the same trial to come into our lives until we get the lesson.

~ We are familiar with Job. God planned for Job's proving process by Satan. Satan's proving of Job was God's idea

~ Job 1:8:2:3 God asked Satan have you considered my servant Job?

~ Satan acknowledged that God had set parameters around Job's proving process. Satan needed permission from God to test Job

~ This testing/proving was to teach Job to trust God during the proving processes

~ Satan is still wondering around looking for believers to devour (1 Pet 5:8)

~ God permits trials to prove and purify the believer

~ Romans 8 is a chapter that deals with idea that we go from suffering to glory. In that context we have Rom 8:28

4 Protecting

~ Ezra 8:22,31 when Ezra was returning to Jerusalem he was ashamed to ask for an escort of the king because he boasted of

~ *Ezra 8:21-23 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. 22 For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. 23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.*

*Ezra 8:31-32 Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. 32 And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.*

### People we see God protected and the principle we learn from their protection

- Abraham - God protected Abraham from his own foolishness twice
  - Gen 12:10-13 Abraham went into Egypt because of a famine in the land
  - Gen 20 – Abraham goes to Gerar
  - In both cases he tells Sara to pretend she's Abraham'
- God's people in the wilderness as they journeyed to the Promised Land. His presence guided them and helped them in battle.
  - God's presence with us is our protection day and night as the cloud and fire guided them
- Ezra – A safe journey to Jerusalem
- Job – There was a hedge of protection around Job until God started moving the boundaries of the hedge. We learn from Job that God's removal of the hedge only to the saving of his life was in the will of God
- David – God protected him from Saul and Absalom. God kept David safe from Saul but God also used this time to prepare David for being king over Israel. God protected David so he could fulfill the call on his life
- The writer of Psalm 119 – As we seek God's protection we look to the God's word
- Elijah – Jezebel had intention to kill him, that's why he ran (1 Kings 19). After Elijah ran (1 Kings 21) he went back to his ministry and rebuked Ahab in 1 Kings 21. He went back and Jezebel didn't get him. He was to anoint Hazeel, Jehu, and Elisha. He would be a mentor to Elisha. Elisha would perform twice amount of miracles as Elijah did. His work wasn't done and he had to train Elisha
- Jonah – Kept safe in the his running away from the will of God
- Jesus – The crowd wanted to throw him off the cliff in Luke 4, he was protected by the Father in the garden as he suffered physically. The Father preserved him from premature physical death. God the Father didn't deliver Jesus in the event of the crucifixion because that was a necessary conclusion to his life on earth. His purpose for coming was the cross, so Jesus couldn't die until his work was finished
- Paul – He was stoned, shipwrecked, and beaten (Acts 27; 2 Cor 1:1-10; 11:23-28). God wanted Paul to fulfill his call. In his last shipwreck he was told he must go to Caesar and witness (Acts 27:24)

~ If the Lord permits tragedy in the life of his child we can take comfort that he has permitted it.

~ Notice how the world blames God when things go wrong but never thank him when things go well

~ Ps 116:15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints

### 5 Providing

~ One of the OT name for God is Jehovah-Jireh which means God provides

~ He provided for the Israelites all through their wilderness journey. Neither their clothes nor shoes wore out

~ When Israel fled from Egypt they were provided with supplies for their journey

~ In the book of Ezra Cyrus sent captives back to Jerusalem and also provided them with supplies for their journey

~ When Nehemiah rebuilt the walls the king provided lumber for rebuilding the walls

~ Paul was in prison yet told the Philippians that my God shall supply all your needs (Phil 4:19)

~ In Acts 4 the Lord provided salvation for the world through Christ and also provided boldness for the apostles

~ What drives our need for things and stuff? Is it when comparing ourselves to others?

~ Paul spoke in 1 Timothy 6:6-10 about this:

- V6 Godliness with contentment is great gain
- V7 Emptiness – we came into this world with nothing and we'll leave with nothing
- V8 Contentment
- V9 Lust
- V10 Love of \$ is root of all evil

~ When God doesn't seem to provide for our needs perhaps it's a chance to trust him in the process

### Conclusion

~ Faith looks beyond current circumstances and sees the providence of God at work