

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

The theme of God's Providence, whether applying to the past, present, or future, is present in all its aspects in one form or another right throughout Scripture, from the very first chapter in the Book of Genesis (CP Gen 1:1-30), to the very last chapter in the Book of Revelation (CP Rev 22:1-14) and Jehovah-Jireh 'The Lord Will Provide' (CP Gen 22:1-14). There are at least three aspects of God's Providence – *preservation* (CP Gen 45:5-7; Psa 36:5-9; Jude 1:1), *provision* (CP Gen 43:14). Here God is called "God Almighty" – **El-Shaddai** (CP Gen 17:1-5). *El Shaddai* pictures God as the All-bountiful, All-sufficient One, the supplier of all the needs of His people. Abraham only knew God as *El-Shaddai* when God made His covenant with him (CP Ex 6:1-4), and **Jehovah-Jireh**, *the Lord will Provide* (CP Gen 22:1-14). In Providence God assumes responsibility for the eternal care of the universe. It takes in provision for and preservation of His creation in all eternity. God manifested Himself as the All-Bountiful One when He decreed and brought about the abundance of all things (CP Gen 1:20-31; 8:22; 49:22-25; Lev 25:18-19; 26:3-6; De 7:11-15; Job 38:25-41; Psa 36:5-9; 65:9-13; 136:25; 147:7-14; Mal 3:10-12; Mt 6:25-33; 10:29-31; Ac 14:17; 2Cor 9:8-11; Eph 3:20; Php 4:19-20).

The third aspect of God's Providence is *government*. The Doctrine of Providence affirms God's absolute Sovereignty over His creation and confirms the dependence of all creation on the Creator, which clearly and unequivocally refutes the theory of evolution, or that the Universe is governed by chance or fate. God is in absolute control. *Providence* means forethought, to know ahead, care, prudence, provision. God's Providence refers to God's unceasing activity in His creation by which He preserves and governs the Universe which fulfils His purposes for His creation (CP Psa 37:22-29; 47:2-9; 103:1-22; Pr 21:1; Isa 46:3-10; Ro 8:18-25, 28-30; Eph 1:3-14; He 1:1-3; 2Pe 3:1-7). It is not possible to include every Scripture pertaining to God's Providence in this study so we will just randomly select certain ones to examine as the study progresses. (See also author's study *God – His Nature, His Names, His Attributes* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**).

God's Providence, His Sovereignty over His creation, and His redemptive plan for fallen man are inextricably linked, working together for good to those who love God, as those Scriptures all clearly teach. Psa 37:22 is a prophecy that will be fulfilled in the Millennium at Christ's Second Coming when He will establish God's Eternal Kingdom on earth, and all those that love God will rule and reign with Christ throughout eternity (CP Psa 37:22-29; Mt 5:3-12; 25:31-46; Rev 20:1-10). Psa 103:19 highlights God's absolute Sovereignty over His creation although His Kingdom does not yet rule over all (CP 2Cor 4:4). Satan is the ruler of this present world, but this will come to an end at Christ's Second Coming (CP Psa 103:19 with 1Cor 15:20-28; Eph 1:3-11; Col 1:9-17). Ro 8:18-25, 28-30 and Eph 1:3-14 both present God's Providence in the form of His redemptive plan for fallen man. There is no convoluted meaning to it as some would have us believe; that God has already determined who will, and who will not be saved (see also author's comments on Ro 8:28-30, Eph 1:3-6, 1:9-12 and 1:11-14 in his book **A Question and**

Answer Study of the New Testament; and his studies, *Salvation – A Free Will Choice or Predestinated?* and *Chosen by God?* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**).

In the context of He 1:1-3 we see again God's absolute Sovereignty over His creation. His Providence is presented as the power of His Word upholding the whole of the created order. The power that brought the Universe into being and that still sustains it over six thousand years later is the very same power that purifies repentant sinners, redeems their souls from destruction, heals their bodies, satisfies their mouths with good things that their strength is renewed as the eagle, and preserves them unto everlasting life (CP Psa 103:2-5; 104:1-35; 145:1-21; 147:1-20; Col 1:9-17). God's Providence also makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and the rain to fall on the just and on the unjust (CP Mt 5:45 with Job 25:2-3; Psa 65:9).

In the Divine order no one and nothing is free to act independently of God's will and plan for His creation. "*Mother Nature*" and the so-called "*Laws of Nature*" and "*Forces of Nature*" are complete misnomers. They neither have inherent power nor work by themselves. They are nothing more than man's description of how he perceives God at work in the world. God acts in accordance with the laws and principles He Himself has established (CP Gen 45:4-8; De 8:17-18; Pr 16:33; 21:1-2; Ro 9:21-22). God's actions though do not violate or negate humans' responsibility as moral beings (CP Ecc 11:1-6). This is the Law of Sowing and (CP also Psa 126:5-6) Reaping. It is an integral part of God's Providence. Not only is the general course of nature sustained by God's Providence though, but the moral order and its logical consequences as well (CP Ga 6:7-8). God's Providence sustaining the moral order is the principal theme of the Book of Proverbs. (See also author's comments on Ro 9:14-18, 9:19-21 and Ga 6:7-8 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and his studies, *The Law of Sowing and Reaping* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith** and *Insight into Living – A Study on Proverbs* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**).

God's Providence also includes His decree to permit sin. This may be a hard teaching for some Christians to accept, but it is clearly illustrated in Scripture by Joseph's testimony in Gen 50. After he had revealed himself to his brothers in Egypt who had sold him into slavery many years before as a youth, Joseph told them that although they had meant it for evil against him, God meant it for good, "*to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive*" (CP Gen 50:18-22). The complete Biblical record of the events leading up to Joseph's testimony here is found in Gen Ch 37-50. Christians are encouraged to read those scriptures – there is much profit in what they teach (CP Gen 37:1-50:26).

God's Providence in all its aspects is the predominant theme in Jesus' teachings in Mt Ch 5-7 in which He instructs those who would follow Him how to live Godly lives as the pre-condition for entry into the Eternal Kingdom (CP Mt 5:1-7:29). These teachings

by Jesus are what is commonly called in the contemporary Church the *Sermon on the Mount*. (In Luke's Gospel it is recorded as the Sermon on the Plain (CP Lu 6:17, 20-49)). The declarations of blessedness Jesus pronounces upon Christians in Mt 5:1-11 are known as the *Beatitudes* (CP Mt 5:1-11). While the Beatitudes are the principles upon which the Kingdom of God in the earth is built, they also present God's Providence in all its aspects. *Blessed* here means much more than just being happy, its normal meaning. Here it implies the enviable state of those who have inherited God's Kingdom "...for great is your reward in Heaven" (CP V 12). *Blessed* in effect here means being in receipt of God's favour – an expression of God's Providence. This of course only applies to those who conform to the conditions attached to the blessings (CP also Lu 6:20-26).

In continuing His Sermon on the Mount in Mt 6:9-15, Jesus also presents the theme of God's Providence in the Lord's Prayer (CP Mt 6:9-15), and in His direction to His followers in V 25-34 not to be anxious about how they will cope with the circumstances of life (CP Mt 6:25-34). See also author's comments on Mt 5:1-12, 5:13-16, 5:17-19, 5:23-24, 5:25-26, 5:31-32, 5:38-42, 6:1-4, 6:7-8, 6:16-18, 6:24, 7:1-5, 7:6, 7:13-14, 7:21 and Lu 6:36-38 in his book **A Question and**

Answer Study of the New Testament, and his studies *Sowing and Reaping* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith**, *Conditions of Entry into Heaven; the Kingdom of God; The Beatitudes* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**, *The Doctrine of Grace; the sermon on the Mount; God's Perfect Self-revelation* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**, *The Six Days Of Creation and The Fear of God* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 3)**.

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As noted at the outset of this study the theme of God's Providence in all its aspects, past, present and future is present right throughout Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, and it is not possible to examine every Scripture here. Those subject of this study, and all the cross-reference Scriptures and studies referred to herein, provide a comprehensive cross-section of study material on God's Providence for the purpose of this exercise. In closing now, readers are encouraged to search the Scriptures for themselves for other Scriptures pertinent to this subject matter, especially the Books of Exodus, Psalms and Proverbs. They will be richly rewarded.