

Series: The Providence of God #1465

Title: Acts 17:28; Genesis 24:12-15
God Preserves

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world! All this week we have been on a walk throughout several passages of both the Old and New Testament to observe the nature of God's providence in this: God preserves everyone and everything He has created. When we talk about God's providence we mean that God preserves everyone and everything He has created. Preserving all life, sustaining all life, is what God does.

Acts chapter 17 and verse 28 summarizes this succinctly. **"For in [God] we live and move and have our being."** Our very being is grounded in *God*. If He does not create us and preserve us, we do not exist. Period. That's the way it is. And not only people, but all of God's creation (big and small) will cease to exist.

We have established that. And now I want to tell you about this second aspect to the providence of God. Once I do that I will make the connection between what we have discussed Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (yesterday) of this week to what we will discuss today and again next week. Please follow along now, and be sure and listen again via the free God Is Podcast if you would like. That is available right now from godisministry.org, that's godisministry.org.

The second aspect to the providence of God is that God directs the actions of everyone and everything He has created, working all things together for His honor and His glory. Anticipating that you would like to hear that again, let me repeat it. If you have an app open with a notes section, jot this down or go old school and write it down. **By providence we mean that God directs the actions of everyone and everything He has created, working all things together for His honor and His glory.**

So, here is what God does in His providence. Having created everyone and everything and preserving everyone and everything, God continually directs the actions of everyone and everything. And He directs those actions towards a certain end. That end is that everyone and everything honors and glorifies God. To quote A.A. Hodge, "There is a design in providence (*Outlines of Theology*, 262)." "There is a design in providence."

His Dad, Charles Hodge, puts it this way. And here I am paraphrasing Dr. Hodge. God has an end to be attained. And to accomplish His end, God so governs the universe (He so directs, He so controls) the sequence of all events so as to make certain the accomplishment of all His purposes (*Systematic Theology, Volume I*, 581-582, written in my own words).

And Charles Hodge adds that the providence of God is easy for God. Now I will quote him directly. "This doctrine necessarily flows from the Scriptural idea of God. He is declared to be a personal being, infinite in wisdom, goodness, and power...He must be concerned for the good of great and small. The idea that God would create this vast universe teeming with life in all its forms, and exercise no control over it...is utterly inconsistent with the nature of God. And to suppose that anything is too great to be comprehended in His control, or anything so minute to escape His notice...or distract His attention...is to forget that God is infinite (*Systematic Theology, Volume I*, 583)." (End quote.)

The best way to read these quotations for yourself is to visit our website, godisministry.org, and click "Read Along" beside each podcast. When you do up pops my manuscript. All of the Bible references and quotations are right there, in print, for you. Just visit godisministry.org and click on the podcast you want to listen to, then "Read Along."

The reason I spent these previous three days affirming the first aspect to the providence of God (He preserves what He creates) is to then link it to this second aspect in His providence. God directs the actions of everyone and everything He has created, working all things together for His honor and His glory. Simply, the providence of God is God preserving and directing everyone and everything He has made. And He directs all of this to *His* honor and to *His* glory.

Francis Turretin, the third member of this theological trinity we're learning from, puts all of this together by saying that as we "depend upon God [for our] being [so we also depend upon God] in the operation (of our lives) (*Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 503)." He's right. You and I depend totally on God for our life and that means we also depend upon God to so direct all of our actions, to work all of them together, for His honor and His glory. And do you know that this includes our *sin*?

Whoa! Wait. *What?* Yes. Even your sin and my sin is directed by God such that, in the end, God is honored and God is glorified. Now that is hard to understand. It is. And, of course, we will now develop this biblical truth. This tells you why I have interest in teaching on the providence of God. I want to show you how Satan's sin, Eve's sin, and Adam's sin – our sin - will ultimately be so directed, so governed, so ruled by God that even all that evil will be for good.

But be forewarned, dear listener, this does not ever mean that you and I are not responsible for our sin! The providence of God never means that men and women are not responsible for and are not held to account for our sin. Just as God holds Satan accountable, God holds Adam accountable, and God holds Eve accountable, so too God holds us all accountable for our evil thoughts, words, and deeds.

Are you listening? God is never the cause of sin, nor does He ever approve of sin. We are guilty. We are the cause of our sin, we are solely responsible, and we will be judged and held to account before God one day. This we can be *sure* of! I really hope you heard me on that, and I will be emphasizing this again as we get into the Scripture.

And now is also a good time to remind you that this is a series of teaching. One day builds upon the one before it. So, stick with us if you would. All that needs to be said can never be said in one radio broadcast or internet podcast. Foundation stones do need to be laid. So, whatever you do, do not drop off here thinking, "Wow! This is great. I am at liberty to sin now, because even my sin God is going to use for His glory. Well then to God be the glory!" If that is your mentality, then you are in for a very rude awakening when you meet God. We must never use as justification for our sin what God so clearly condemns.

As we move further into this second aspect of God's providence I want you to know the Bible is loaded in chapters and verses that support what has just been said. Honestly, the texts are overwhelming in number and depth of truth. So what I have needed to do is be wise and discerning as to which texts to show you and which ones to leave out, trusting that the Spirit of God will direct you to them as you continue your own reading of the Word of God.

My approach will be to simplify by drawing you into two lives that best demonstrate for us the providence of God over evil and sin. One life was lived in the Old Testament times and the other life in the New Testament times. Do you know whom I am thinking of? I will give you to time think about this, and reveal the names next week, right here on *God Is*!

With the time we now have remaining for this week, I want to show you that even things we consider to be fortuitous are really not fortuitous at all. Rather the hand of God is in these events. If you have been a Christian for any length of time at all, even just a few minutes or hours, cannot you look at your life and see that what you once thought was coincidence or a "it just so happened that..." moment was actually God actively working in your life, directing you towards His purposes for you?

In Genesis chapter 27 an aging and elderly Abraham sends his servant Eliezer to go find a wife for Abraham's son Isaac (who we spoke of yesterday). Listen to what happens when this servant gets to where he is going (Mesopotamia and the city of Nahor). I am reading Genesis 24, verses 12-15. Genesis 24, beginning in verse 12, which begins with a prayer.

"[Eliezer, Abraham's servant] said, 'O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and show lovingkindness to my master Abraham. ¹³ Behold, I am standing by the spring, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water; ¹⁴ now may it be that the girl to whom I say, 'Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also'—may she be the one whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac; and by this I will know that You have shown lovingkindness to my master.'

¹⁵ Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah...came out with her jar on her shoulder.”

Wow! As we know, Rebekah became the wife of Isaac. This was not fortuitous. This was God's providence! This was God directing the actions of everyone, of God working all things together for His honor and His glory. Read the rest of the story. This becomes obvious. Hey, read it this weekend and join me again on Monday for God Is!

---END---