

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Rom 8:28-39

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Word providence used once in Scripture Acts 24:2 (KJV and ASV) in reference to Felix - it means forethought - a term used to "butter up" or brag on Felix in regard to his relationship to the Jews.
- B. This idea of forethought and interest is also involved in the word "careth" in 1Pet 5:7 - same idea in the story of the good Samaritan Lk 10:34,35
- C. So, this is a Bible subject but has possibly been neglected and as a result of a misunderstanding or ignorance of God's providence or care, fertile soil has been left for false teaching
 - 1. One extreme is the direct operation of the Holy Spirit
 - 2. Another is gloom, doom, depression & anxiety we feel

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT DIVINE PROVIDENCE IS NOT

- A. Not a miracle
 - 1. Miracle an act of God superseding or suspending a natural law
 - 2. Miracle a visible sign which showed all men that a super-human power was at work
 - 3. Feeding 5,000 with 5 loaves and 2 fishes Jhn 6:8-14
 - 4. To confirm the word Mk 16:17-20; Jhn 20:30,31
 - 5. When word was completed and confirmed miracles ceased 1Cor 13:8-13
- B. Providence differs from miracle in that its ends brought about by means of established laws of God through ordinary channels
- C. God's providence does not eliminate our having to follow His word in every detail Matt 7:21
 - 1. Word bring conversion and edification Rom 1:16; Acts 20:32
 - 2. It does not eliminate free moral agency of man
- D. God works with two kinds of wills: "willing wills" and "opposing wills" (rebellious wills)
 - 1. God overrules the evil intent of those who persecute us and cause it to bring ultimate good (if not in this life then in the one to come)
 - 2. Joseph & brothers Gen 50:20; Psa 105:17
 - 3. Rom 8:28 does not mean that everything that happens to us is good within itself, but that God can through his providence ultimately overrule bad for our good

II. SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

- A. Sun, rain, fruitful seasons Matt 5:45; Acts 14:17;
- B. In Him we have our being Acts 17:28
- C. God knows when sparrow falls Matt 10:29; He numbers the hairs of our head Lk 12:6,7
- D. God eyes are over the righteous 1Pet 3:12
- E. God rules in the kingdoms of men Dan 4:25; Rev 1:5; Rom 13:1
 - 1. Is the election of an ungodly, unprincipled man according to God's plan - with God's approval?
 - 2. If so, does voting against him constitute fighting against God? No, I am simply doing what I can to fight against evil.
 - a. I don't think God "targets" certain individuals and causes them to be elected
 - b. However he does use those who are in power to accomplish his aims and purposes

III. PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER

- A. Prayer a demonstration of our faith in God's providence
- B. Prayer not answered through miracles but providence – working through established laws and ordinary channels
 - 1. We pray for opportunities to preach Col 4:3 and God opens 1Cor 16:9; 2Cor 2:12
 - 2. Pray for daily food Matt 6:11 - we labor according to God's will Eph 4:28 and are provided for
 - 3. We pray for the sick Jas 5:14-18 then do what we can for them – God heals through providence in accordance with His will
 - 4. Pray "lead us not into temptation" Matt 6:13 - So, we watch and pray Matt 26:41 and God provides a way to escape 1Cor 10:13 - but we must look for it
- C. We need to have faith that the Lord is at hand and cares for us 1Pet 5:7 and in everything we can make our Request known and he will answer our prayers 1Jhn 5:14,15 (note Jas 4:14 "if the Lord will")

CONCLUSION:

- A. Note Jesus' teaching in Matt 6:24-34 certainly this is a promise of the divine providence of God
- B. Jesus is not teaching laziness Eph 4:28; we are to work then leave the rest to God
- C. Seek kingdom first and God will provide material needs Matt 6:33
- D. Faith in God's providential care will take the worry out of our lives Rom 4:21; Psa 37:25
- E. However, to receive eternal blessings we must work in accordance to his will Matt 7:21